

T H E
Moral Philosopher.

V O L. III.

Superstition and Tyranny

Inconsistent with

T H E O C R A C Y.

Occasioned by the

Reverend Dr. LELAND'S Second Volume of
The Divine Authority of the OLD and NEW
TESTAMENT asserted:

A N D T H E

Reverend Mr. LOWMAN'S *Dissertation on the*
CIVIL GOVERNMENT *of the* HEBREWS.

By P H I L A L E T H E S.

L O N D O N:

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Where may be had,

The First and Second VOLUME.

PREFACE

I HAVE long been desirous to see this work
printed, and this time I have at last
but still to appear, and I have
Occasion to say, and what I may
mean it is, in writing, a work of
I had bid it now as a first and final
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Thus the whole
Wings of the Spirit



T H E

P R E F A C E.

I HAVE very little to add, by Way of Preface, to this third and last Volume; but just to apprize the Reader of the Occasion of it, and what he may expect from it. In entering upon this Controversy, I had laid it down as a first and fundamental Principle with me, that natural and revealed Religion are essentially and subjectively the same, and that they can only be distinguished by the different Ways or Means of conveying the same Truths to the Mind; which is either by Reason and Argument, from the Nature of Things, and moral Fitness of Actions, or in the Way of *authoritative Teaching*. When this Authority is supposed to be divine and infallible, it is called *Revelation*. Thus the whole *Bible*, or all the Works and Writings of the antient *Hebrew* and *Jewish*

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Authors,

Authors, both in the *Old Testament* and the *New*, whether historical, moral, or prophetic, which has been considered and taught as authoritatively divine and infallible, is vulgarly called and accounted *Revelation*. In this popular Sense, and common Acceptation, I have always used the Word, where-ever I have distinguished *Reason* from *Revelation*, or *natural* from *revealed* Religion. But in this popular, vulgar Sense of the Word, I have steadily and uniformly asserted, and, I think, evidently proved, that *Revelation* is not *infallible*, or that those antient *Hebrew* and *Jewish* Historians were never under any unerring Guidance of the *Spirit*, or *Holy Ghost*. But how far I have proved this, or what Proof the Gentlemen on the other Side have brought to the contrary, is what I cannot determine for myself, but must be left to the Judgment of the Reader.

As my learned Adversaries have assumed their own first Principle of *Scripture Infallibility* as a Postulatum, and argued upon it as granted, without Proof, I might have absolutely rejected it without farther Debate, since they could have no Right to argue from a Principle which was not granted, and which they

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they could not prove. But since I found them resolved to put me to the Drudgery, contrary to all Right and Reason, and all the Laws of Dispute, I have endeavoured, on their Invitation and Call, to prove the Negative against them. But if I should happen to have been mistaken in this, it cannot prove them to be in the Right, unless they would assume every Thing as true by Authority, Prescription, and Possession, the contrary to which cannot be demonstrated. And this, indeed, is their common Way, not to think themselves in the least obliged to prove their own Principles, or to judge of Probability on either Side, but to insist upon their Right of *Possession*, and *uninterrupted Succession*, till they can be demonstratively forced out of it. The highest Probability in the World can be of no Weight at all against them, while there is but a bare Possibility, that they may not be mistaken, though they can say nothing for their being in the Right.

If supernatural Revelation contains Doctrines and Principles of Practice, which were absolutely above and beyond all Search and Investigation of human Reason, it is wonderful, that they should not be able to in-

stance in any one such Doctrine which they dare abide by, and stand to, and in which they are agreed! And 'tis, I think, very extraordinary, that they should not be able to prove, in any one Instance, that Doctrines absolutely above and beyond all Search and Investigation of Reason, may be yet subject to the Judgment of Reason, when once they are discovered and proposed. They would not talk thus absurdly in Matters of *Eye-sight*, as they do of *Understanding*, or pretend, that a Thing which is not the natural Object of Sight, may be perceived and judged of by Sight. But such Contradictions we must expect, while *Authority* is substituted for *Reason*, and every Man's own Opinion, or Sense of Scripture confounded with Revelation and *divine Authority*.

Were Mathematicians, Artificers, Mechanicians, and Professors of every Kind thus divided, and could not agree in any one common Principle relating to their own Science and Professions, I presume no one would think they were all directed by the same common, infallible Rule, or that they really knew any Thing of what they professed and talked

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talked of. Their Pretence to an infallible Science, or infallible Rule of Action, would be looked upon with Contempt and Scorn; and if they should plead, that their Masters were all inspired, and had taught them under an unerring Guidance, they might, perhaps, move Laughter, but could never gain Profelytes. But thus sacred is Nonsense, when big with Divinity.

The Reverend Mr. *Lotwman*, in his *Dissertation on the Civil Government of the Hebrews*, has attempted to overthrow what I had offered relating to the first Distribution of *Canaan*, and the exorbitant Power and Property of the Tribe of *Levi*, or Spirituality of that Nation. I have briefly replied to his Exceptions in the Conclusion, so far as I thought necessary and sufficient, in Justification of my own Account and Computation. He assumes as others had done before him, the Theocratic Constitution of *Moses*, as a Postulatum; for I cannot see, that he has offered any Thing in Proof of it, unless it be the Authority of *Moses* himself, which is the very Thing in Dispute. In a large Introduction, or Preliminary Discourse,

I have endeavoured to derive this Theocracy from its first Rise and Original in *Egypt*, where *Joseph* had introduced and settled the same hereditary, oppressive Priesthood, and the same Sort of Tyranny in Church and State, two hundred Years before. And as *Moses* was an *Egyptian* by Birth and Education, and thoroughly instructed in all the Laws, Religion, and Polity of *Egypt*, he founded his own Law and Priesthood upon the same Plan. This is what I have attempted at least to prove, and for a clear Answer to which, I shall look upon this Gentleman as accountable, since he, and his Friends, seem to think, that he has fairly detected my Mistakes, and set this whole Matter in a true Light.

To conclude, I would have it considered, that I never argue against bare Possibilities, where there is not strict Demonstration on one Side. Where Demonstration cannot be had, the greater Weight of Probability ought to determine us in a Judgment of Reason. And keeping to this Rule, if the Gentlemen on the other Side of the Question have any Thing more to offer, I shall be ready to consider

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sider it. But, perhaps, after all, they may find it necessary to drop the Defence of positive Institutions, and supernatural Doctrines, which have been all human Invention, and to leave the eternal, immutable Religion of God and Nature to take its own Course; which could not but universally prevail and take Place in the World, were it recommended and enforced by its own native Light and Evidence, and not so much depreciated and undervalued by some of the Spirituality, who, it seems, are *set for the Defence of the Gospel* against the Sufficiency and Availability of moral Truth and Righteousness with God. The Necessity of Revelation, as proved by Miracles, Prophecy, and supernatural Facts, is the common, popular Cry: But what that Revelation is, and what its peculiar Doctrines and Duties are, which must be thus supernaturally proved, and which could not otherwise have been known, or rationally assented to, we are never like to be told; and yet, till they can agree upon something certain and determinate of this Kind, they will in vain labour to maintain any real Distinction between natural and revealed Religion; for every impartial, considerate

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derate Man, who can but give himself Leave to think, must soon come to see, that all this Clamour and Outcry comes from nothing else but implicit Faith, a strong Presumption, and Zeal without Knowledge.

THE

T H E

C O N T E N T S.

The INTRODUCTION, or PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

AN Account of the antient Patriarchal Religion. The Genius and figurative Turn of their Language. The different Ways of God's appearing and speaking to them. An Historical Account of the Descent of the Hebrew Shepherds into Egypt. Of their first Admission, and peaceable Settlement there; their over-running and enslaving the whole Land, and, at last, their Reduction, Subjection, Expulsion, and sudden, precipitate Flight, which providentially prevented their intended Slaughter and Destruction by the Egyptians. A more particular Consideration of the Miracles of Moses in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness. The first Rise and Foundation of the Mosaic Theocracy, from the spiritual Blindness, Superstition, and Slavery, which Joseph had introduced and settled in Egypt two hundred Years before. Mr. Shuckford's Account of the antient Shepherds, who were expelled and driven out of Egypt, consider-

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Super-

Superstition and Tyranny

Inconsistent with

THEOCRACY.

B E I N G

SOME REMARKS and OBSERVATIONS
on a Book, Intitled,

A DISSERTATION ON THE CIVIL
GOVERNMENT OF THE *HEBREWS*.
In which, *The true Designs, and Nature of*
their Government are explain'd. The Ju-
stice, Wisdom and Goodness of the MOSAI-
CAL CONSTITUTIONS *are vindicated: In*
particular from some late, unfair and false
Misrepresentations of them in the MORAL
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Superstition and Tyranny

Protestantism

THEOCRACY.

Part I.

Some Remarks and Observations
on a Book Entitled

A DISSERTATION on the Civil
Government of the Hebrews
in which the true Nature and
Limits of a Monarchy are
discussed and the Rights of
the People are asserted
and the Principles of Liberty
are explained
by
J. G. S. P. H. M. O. R. A. L.

PHILOSOPHER

T H E

INTRODUCTION.

THE learned Defenders of *Moses* always assume as a Postulatum, or take it as granted without Proof, that this Government was a *Theocracy*, and that *Moses* had received every Word of his Law immediately from the Mouth of *Jehovah* himself, whose intimate Friend and Companion he was: He could talk with *Jehovah* Face to Face, he could be admitted at any Time into his Presence, and make as free with him, as any Man could do with his Friend and Confident. Nay, he could often change the Purposes of *Jehovah*, and bring him into other Measures, whenever he had resolved on, or declared any Thing against the *peculiar People*.

These learned Men having supposed this, and taken it as a first Principle, no Difficul-

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ties afterwards can stand in their Way: Some of them may be artificially evaded, and the rest quite slipt over without any Notice, where no Evasions at all can be found or thought of. The plainest Marks and Appearances in the World, of Design, Artifice and Imposture, such as must overthrow and set aside the like Pretensions in any other Government, cannot be of the least Force or Consequence against a *Theocracy*.

These learned Men, then, have very securely entrench'd and guarded themselves against all Attacks from what Quarter soever. It is impossible for any Man to argue against them without arguing against God, and disputing the Right of *Jehovah* in making a Law, that ought never to be copy'd, imitated or taken as a Model under any other Government. This, it seems, was the sole Work and legal Prerogative of *Jehovah*, the tutelar, oracular God of *Israel*; and tho' it may be marvelous in our Eyes, that can be no Objection to the Truth, Reasonableness or Divinity of it. And if this should be above any Man's Comprehension, and beyond the utmost Stretch of his Faith, or Capacity of his Assent, that Man can be no Christian.

These Gentlemen having laid this Foundation of Christianity, and entrench'd themselves under impregnable Darknes, go on with invincible Resolution to batter and destroy all Moral Reason and Philosophy. But, I think,

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I have as good a Right to a Postulatum as they, and shall venture to demand one, which, I presume, cannot be reasonably deny'd me; and which is this, That no Book or Writing can prove itself, and ought not to be admitted upon its own Authority against the plainest Marks and Appearances of Fraud, Artifice and Deception. If this be not admitted, it must be impossible to detect or set aside any Scheme of Imposture, Superstition or false Religion in the World, which pretends to Revelation and Divine Authority. The *Mohammedan* Koran, the *Persian* Zerduft, or any other Scheme of Imposture and false Religion, must be receiv'd, and submitted to, where all the Powers of Prejudice, Education and riveted Habits are strong enough to fix and confirm them. A Man who governs and directs himself upon this Principle, would be as true and good a *Jew*, *Mahometan* or *Magian*, as he is a *Christian*, had his Education and Prejudices happened to have given him that Turn. A Man in this Way would prove by invincible Reason, venture his own Life upon it, and sacrifice the Lives of all Infidels or Unbelievers, that *Moses*, *Zoroaster*, or *Mahomet*, were true Prophets, sent from God to reveal his Will for the Salvation of Mankind, and that no Salvation or divine Favour could be obtain'd in any other Way.

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But before I proceed farther, I shall here give a short Account of the first Descent of the *Hebrew* Shepherds into *Egypt*, the Settlement they gain'd there, and the Consequences of it in their Departure and Expulsion after 210 Years. I shall take this Account from the *Hebrew* Historians themselves, as they have it in their own Books, and then compare it a little with the Accounts given of it by profane Authors.

In the first Descent of these *Hebrew* Shepherds into *Egypt*, we find an extraordinary Providence, as their own Historian relates it. A *Hebrew* Slave, named *Joseph*, having been sold into *Egypt*, was there bought, and taken into the Family of *Potiphar*, *Pharaoh's* chief Steward: Here he so far ingratiated himself with his Master, that he entrusted him with his whole Interest, and made him the chief Manager and Director of all his Affairs. Amidst this Prosperity and good Turn of Fortune, *Potiphar's* Wife, and *Joseph's* Mistress, fell in Love with him, and on his refusing her amorous Sollicitations, she was so highly provoked, that she accused him of an Attempt to ravish her, and got him committed a close Prisoner. This was the King's Prison, or the Place where the State Prisoners were confined, and in *Potiphar's* own House, *Gen.* xxxix. 20. xli. 10. During this Imprisonment, *Joseph* wrought himself as much into
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the Favour of the Keeper, or Master of the Prison, as he had before in the Family at large; for the Keeper of the Prison committed the whole Charge of all the Prisoners to *Joseph*, without taking any farther Care or Cognizance of them himself, Chap. xxxix. 22, 23. Here, therefore, in the Governor's own House, or under his Roof and Inspection, *Joseph* had the same Command and Authority over the Prisoners, as he had been entrusted with before in the House and Family at large.

Here it may be proper to remark, that this *Potiphar*; *Pharaoh's* chief Steward, was an *Eunuch*; but what an Eunuch should do with a Wife, or, supposing he had one, how she should defile his Bed, or prove false to him, is hard to conceive: But be this as it will, it is plain, that this young *Hebrew* Politician had always Fortune on his Side. How long he continued in this second Post of Honour, as Sub-Governor of the King's Prison, is not said; but it must, probably, have been for some Course of Years; for when he was sold into *Egypt*, he was but a Youth or a Lad; but when he was sent for to Court by *Pharaoh*, he was thirty Years old. This rising Favourite of Fortune discovered very early his enterprizing Genius and aspiring Temper; and it was this boundless Ambition, and Thirst of Wealth and Dominion, which incurr'd the Displeasure of his Brethren, made
B 4 him

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him insufferable in his Father's House, and occasioned a Vassalage, which turned up so much to his Advantage, and to the Ruin of his own Country, as well as of *Egypt*. I presume no Body will say, that *Joseph* was the first or last Man, who has providentially succeeded as a bold Adventurer for Wealth and Dominion: But what Use he made of his good Fortune, and how much either his own Nation, or the Land of *Egypt* in which he had made his Fortune, gain'd by it, may deserve to be farther considered, and in this I shall all along take the *Hebrew* Historian for my Guide.

After *Joseph* had been for some considerable Time in the King's Prison, and there gratify'd his Ambition and Thirst of Power so far as that Station could afford, there happened an Incident, which contributed to his farther Advancement, and rais'd him to a Degree of Wealth and Power in *Egypt*, beyond what his Imagination could ever have suggested, or his utmost Ambition aim'd at.

Pharaoh, King of *Egypt*, having been some Way or other disgusted with his chief Butler and Baker, sent both to the same State Prison, while *Joseph*, under the Name and Notion of a *Hebrew* imprisoned Slave, happened to have the sole Direction and chief Authority there; for the Keeper had left all to his Care and Management, as has been observ'd

observ'd already. Whether *Joseph*, during this Confinement in the King's Prison, and the great Power and Trust there committed to him, had not made up the Matter with his old Mistress, is not said, and I shall presume to determine nothing about it, as designing to keep close to the *Hebrew* Historian himself, and to draw nothing into Consequence, but what must necessarily arise from the Text. But *Pharaoh*, as I observ'd, having committed his chief Butler and Baker to the same Prison, the *Hebrew* Servant and Sub-Governor could not be long unacquainted with them; and *Joseph* was a Man of too much Policy and Penetration not to make his own Use of it.

After these State Prisoners had been some Time under the Sub-Governor's Custody and Management, they both happened to dream a Dream in one Night, which *Joseph* interpreted to them, that one of them, the chief Butler, should, within three Days, be restor'd to his former Dignity and Office, but the other, the Baker, should at the same Time be taken out of Prison, and hanged: This happened accordingly; but *Joseph* had engaged the Butler under a solemn Oath or Promise, that as soon as he should be restored to his former Office, and Favour with the King, he should mention and recommend him to *Pharaoh*; this the Butler promised, but it afterwards slipt his Memory for two Years;

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Years; for whatever Opinion this Courtier might have of *Joseph*, while he was in Prison, and under the *Hebrew* Politician's Command, it seems, he had no such Regard to him, or Expectations from him, as to have set him much at Heart.

Two Years after the Re-advancement of the chief Butler, *Pharaoh* himself had a Dream, which exceedingly perplex'd him, and which none of his Astrologers, Magicians, or wise Men, could interpret: This Anxiety and Distress of the King determin'd the Officer to mention *Joseph*, and get him sent for, who had interpreted his own Dream, and that of the chief Baker, agreeable to the Event: It is probable, that this Officer of the Household having had an Acquaintance with *Joseph* before, and knowing the enterprizing Genius, and vast Ambition of the Man, had resolved never to have mentioned him, or brought him to Court, had not this Incident, and the great Perturbation the King was under, driven him to it at this Time. However, to excuse himself, and make the best of the Matter, he now laid the Blame on his own Memory, and pretended, that he had never once thought of the *Hebrew*, or his Promise to him, from that Time to this, which is hardly credible: But if he dreaded the Consequences of bringing such a Politician and ambitious Enterprizer to Court, and feared the Effects of his ingratiating himself with the

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the King, the Event shew'd, that he was not mistaken in the Man; for this Incident laid the Foundation of the Ruin of *Egypt*, and reduced the finest, richest, and freest Country then in the World, to a State of Misery, Poverty, and Vassalage: It proved the intire Overthrow of a free Constitution, and introduced such an absolute Power, both in Church and State, as had never been known in the World before.

The Story of *Pharaoh's* Dream, and of *Joseph's* Interpretation, is very well known, as related in Chap. xli. There was from thence to follow seven Years of great Plenty, and Abundance of all Sorts of Produce in *Egypt*, and after that, seven Years successively of great Scarcity, Dearth, and Famine, both in *Egypt*, and Countries round about it. *Joseph*, therefore, advises *Pharaoh* to look out for a Man of Wisdom and Understanding, and set him over all the Land of *Egypt*; under this supreme Inspector the King was to appoint Officers, that should gather in the fifth Part of the whole Produce during the seven plentiful Years, which were to be laid up in the King's Store-houses or Granaries, to supply the Land with Corn, when the seven Years of Dearth should come on. This Advice exceedingly pleased the King, and his whole Court, and they soon agreed that no Man could be found of such Wisdom and Understanding, as *Joseph* himself. And now the

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Hebrew Prophet and Politician had at once the whole Power, Force, and Direction of the Kingdom put into his Hands. *Then Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is no Man of Understanding, or of Wisdom, like unto thee. Thou shalt be over mine House, and at thy Word shall all my People be armed; only on the Throne will I be greater than thee. Moreover Pharaoh said to Joseph, Behold, I have set thee over all the Land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his Ring from his Hand, and put it upon Joseph's Hand, and arrayed him in Garments of fine Linen, and put a golden Chain upon his Neck. — Again Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no Man lift up his Hand or his Foot in the Land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph's Name Zaphnath Paaneah, [the Expounder of Secrets] and he gave him to Wife Asenath, the Daughter of Poti-pherah, Prince [or Priest] of On, Ver. 40—45. Here it is evident, that Pharaoh had divested himself of all regal Authority, and retain'd only the Name and Title of King; for he had put the whole Force of the Kingdom, and the Nomination of all Offices and Places of Profit, Power, and Trust into Joseph's Hands. And now the whole Land was in the Power, and at the full Disposal of a Hebrew Stranger, who, a few Years before, had been sold into the Country, as a Slave. What Use he afterwards*

wards made of this Power, and how he acted, as the Father of the People, will soon appear,

Joseph, having received this unlimited Commission, went through all the Land of *Egypt*, appointed his own Officers, and settled Store-houses and Magazines for Corn in every City. So *Joseph* gathered *Wheat* like unto the Sand of the Sea for Multitude, out of Measure, until he left numbering; for it was without Number, Ver. 49. As this seven Years Famine spread not only in *Egypt*, but through all Countries, who were supplied with Corn from *Egypt*, so far as they could have any Communication, it is evident, that there was a Necessity to fortify and garison the Towns and Cities where the Corn was kept, and secured in the King's Magazines and Granaries; without this Precaution, it had been impossible to have prevented the *Egyptians* themselves, as well as other Nations, from seizing the Corn, under so general a Calamity, and so severe a Famine. The *Egyptians*, certainly, would never have brought in their whole Property in Money, Goods, Sheep, and Cattle, Lands of Inheritance, and, at last, have sold themselves, as perpetual Vassals to the Crown, had not the Magazines and Store-houses been strongly fortify'd and guarded: And this, perhaps, is the first Instance of any such Fortresses and Strongholds, as it is the first Instance upon Record of

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of any such absolute, arbitrary Power. What *Joseph* found necessary to enslave *Egypt*, was afterwards found as necessary to enslave other Countries, and for one Country to conquer and enslave another, after the great Empires arose, and War and Destruction became the general Trade.

Joseph having thus made himself Master of *Egypt*, had a good Opportunity of bringing down his Father and Brethren thither, with their whole Families and Substance, of settling them in the best and richest Part of the Land, and disposing among them the chief Places of Power and Profit in that rich and populous Country; and this he brought about without a War, and by the Commission and Authority of *Pharaoh* himself. As the Famine grew, and prevailed over all Lands, *Jaakob* was forced to send his Sons into *Egypt* for Corn; *Joseph* presently knew them, but they did not know him, and could not speak to him without an Interpreter: The Story of what passed between *Joseph* and his Brethren, before he discovered himself to them, is very movingly and pathetically told, and is, perhaps, one of the finest Pieces of Dramatic History in the World. But at length he discovered himself to them, and sent the King's own Coaches and Chariots to bring down his Father and Brethren, with their whole Patriarchy, Wives, Concubines, Servants, and Substance, which
must

must have been very numerous. For though the Number of Souls which came down into *Egypt*, including *Joseph*, and his two Sons born in *Egypt*, are said to be seventy, it is evident, that these were only the Heads and Princes of the Tribes, without including their Servants, their Shepherds and Herdsmen, with their Children, Wives, and Concubines, which must have been at least ten, or, more probably, thirty Times the Number. And, therefore, a whole Province, the Land of *Goshen*, the finest and richest Part of the *Lower Egypt*, was assign'd them, to live separate by themselves, and in their own Way; which could not, surely, have been necessary for seventy Souls, without any farther Property or Dependence; for then a very small Town had been more than sufficient.

Jaakob, with his whole Patriarchy, as before-mentioned, being now come into *Egypt*, *Joseph* acquainted *Pharaoh* with it, and took Part of his Brethren, five Men, and brought them into the King's Presence. Upon *Pharaoh's* asking them, what was their Trade, Business or Profession, *Thy Servants*, say they, *are Shepherds, both we and our Fathers*; and they told the King, they were only come to sojourn in *Egypt* for a Time, and just under the present Necessity, the Famine being then so very severe in *Canaan*, that they had no Pasture for their Sheep, and therefore pray'd the King, that they might have a Settlement
allow'd

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allow'd them in that Country: This was readily granted, the best and richest Part of the Country was assign'd them, and *Joseph* was ordered to make them Governors and Rulers in *Egypt*, and bestow on them such Places, as he thought them most capable of, or fit for, Chap. xlvii. 1—7.

It may be observed here, that these *Hebrews*, when they first came into *Egypt*, assumed and took to themselves the general Name and Distinction of *Shepherds*, which cannot be shewn, or any one Instance given, of any other Nation, or Body of People, in the World. The *Egyptians*, *Arabs*, *Phœnicians*, *Canaanites*, and all other Nations, had Shepherds among them, or Men, whose Business it was to attend and feed their Sheep and Cattle; but no other whole Community were ever known or distinguish'd by the general Name of *Shepherds*, as a Name adopted and assumed by themselves. The Plunders and Devastations of the Shepherds in *Egypt*, their Coming in at first peaceably and without Opposition, their making themselves Masters of the Country, and their Expulsion at last, after a long War, and many sharp Encounters, have been much talk'd of by profane Authors, who have said any Thing of the *Egyptians*; especially, by their own Historian *Manetho*. And great Pains have been taken by the most learned Christian Critics and Historians, to prove, that those Shepherds, so famous

inconsistent with Theocracy. 17

famous in the *Egyptian* History, could not be our *Hebrew* Shepherds, or *Israelites*. But as soon as the *Hebrew* Historian has been just so far corrected, as to be made consistent with himself, there will appear to be a perfect Harmony, and good Agreement betwixt him and all other profane History, and one may serve to confirm and strengthen the other. But more of this afterward: I shall at present pursue the farther Account of the Matter, as the *Hebrew* Historian himself has represented it.

We have seen *Joseph*, in the Beginning of his prime Ministry, secured in the sole Management of the Government, and put into Possession of the whole military Force of the Kingdom; we have seen him, during the first seven Years, acting his Part so well, as to have laid in Corn enough for the whole Land of *Egypt*, and the Countries about, for seven Years longer, and fortifying and guarding those Granaries and Store-Houses so well, that not a Grain of the Corn could afterwards be come at, or distributed to the necessitous People, without his Leave, and upon his own Terms; we have seen him bring down his own Family and Nation into *Egypt*, and there settling them in the very best Part of the Country, where they were to be supplied with Corn, and all Necessaries, at free Cost, while the native *Egyptians* were reduced to the last Extremity, and must either part with all, or perish. All this happened before

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the End of the third Year of the Famine, which is the tenth Year of this *Hebrew's* Government. By the End of this Year, *Joseph* the *Hebrew* Steward had drawn in all the Money in the Land of *Egypt*, and the Land of *Canaan*, and laid it up in the King's Coffers, which were now his own, *Chap.* xlvii. 14. The next Year the Money being all exhausted, and drawn in, he demanded all their live Stock, their Sheep and Cattle, Horses and Asses, as the Purchase of their Lives one Year longer, which was accordingly complied with, *Ver.* 15, 16, 17. This was the fourth Year of the Famine; in the Beginning of the fifth Year, when they had parted with all their other Property, they came again to the generous humane Steward, and represented the growing Calamity and Distress they were under: They told my *Hebrew* Lord, that since he had had all their Money, and all their Flocks and Herds, there was nothing more left in *the Sight of my Lord, but their Bodies, and their Lands*, both which they were willing to part with, and become *Pharaoh's* Slaves and Vassals for ever, rather than perish with Famine. This generous *Hebrew*, who was now, it seems, the Father of the *Egyptians*, took them at their Word, and first took Possession of all the Lands of *Egypt* for *Pharaoh*, who was now but a titular King; and having done this, he removed the People from their former Habitations into the remotest Ci-

ties and Parts of the Country, from one Side of *Egypt* to the other, which was a Sort of Exile in their own Country, and a great Aggravation of their Misery after they had been stripped of all their Property and Possessions, *Ver. 19, 20, 21.* But he did not now seize on the Priests Lands, because *the Priests had an ordinary or stated Allowance from Pharaoh, and they did eat the Ordinary which Pharaoh gave them, wherefore they sold not their Lands, Ver. 22.* The Priests did not now sell their Lands, because they were otherwise provided for, and had no Need of it, or otherwise the Crown in this fifth Year might have taken too the Lands of the Priests, as well as the rest. In the sixth Year of the Famine, the People having nothing else to part with, submitted themselves to be *Pharaoh's* Servants, or Vassals, for ever: And now their *Hebrew* Lord, it being impossible to reduce them lower, or make them more miserable, besides the Corn, which was absolutely necessary to preserve Life, gave them Seed-Corn to sow their Land: But this not having been done till toward the End of the sixth Year, they could have no Produce or Subsistence for themselves, till near the End of the seventh and last Year, which terminated the Famine,

Now here we are let into the Secret how the Famine in *Egypt* came to last so long, and by what Means the *Hebrew* Prophet and

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Landlord, the great Task-Master of the *Egyptians*, was enabled to fulfil his own Predictions. For having at first engross'd and monopoliz'd all the Corn, he was resolved, for such a Time, to give out no more of it, than what might be just necessary to support Life from Hand to Mouth, but to let the *Egyptians* have no Corn for Seed, till he had stript them of all their Property, absolutely enslav'd them, and exhausted all his own Stores. They might have had Seed-Corn, sown their Lands, and raised a fresh Supply sooner, as well as now, had their Landlord and Task-Master thought fit to have suffered it. But this could not have answered the Politician's End in perfectly enslaving the People, and making himself Master of the Country.

Some Time in this sixth Year, before the *Egyptians* had been allow'd Seed-Corn, *Joseph* had obtain'd a Decree, or Ordinance, from *Pharaoh*, which made the Church-Lands unalienable, and irrefumable by the Crown; by which Means the Priesthood in *Egypt* became hereditary, and independent of the Crown. In the fifth Year, when all the rest of the Lands were seiz'd to the Use of the Crown, the Priests sold not their Lands, because they were otherwise provided for, and had their ordinary or stated Allowance from the King, as at *Ver. 22*. But at the End of the sixth, or Beginning of the seventh Year, when

when the public Stores and Granaries were well nigh exhausted, and yet the Calamities still increasing, the Priests Lands were not seiz'd, or taken too, *because they were not Pharaoh's*, Ver. 26. These Lands therefore had now been made unalienable, and hereditary, by an irreverfible Decree, or perpetual Grant from the Crown; or otherwise they must have been as much *Pharaoh's*, or as much in his Power as any of the rest. *Pharaoh*, as had been observ'd before, had given the High Priest's Daughter to *Joseph*, as his Wife, in the Beginning of his Preferments, and as one of the first Instances of his Favour. And now, upon the Strength of such an Alliance, he had managed Matters so well, as to have divided the whole Power and Property of *Egypt* between the Church and the Crown. And this laid the Foundation of all the Superstition of *Egypt*, and of the vast Power and Influence of the Priests there in after Ages. For the Priesthood now being hereditary, and the Priests invested with a vast Property in Lands, independent of the Crown; this gave them an Opportunity and Power to work up the People into the highest and grossest Degrees of Superstition, and into an absolute blind Obedience and Resignation to themselves. For being now incredibly rich, and having all the Means of Knowledge and natural Experiments in their Power, they set themselves to the Study of Chymistry, na-

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tural Magic, and occult experimental Philosophy; all which they kept as deep Secrets, and sacred Mysteries to themselves, and made it all pass with the ignorant enslaved Vulgar for Miracles, Revelation, Prophecy, and immediate divine Power; and thus *Egypt* became the Mother and Nurse of Superstition, and which, after the great *Egyptian* Empire arose about *Solomon's* Time, they spread and propagated to all their conquer'd Nations. And this I take to have been the first Rise and Foundation of the *Mosaic Theocracy*; for *Moses* afterward only formed and established an independent Government and Kingdom of his own, upon the very same Plan of Priesthood, which *Joseph* had settled in *Egypt* above 200 Years before.

Any one must see, that *Pharaoh* having invited these Shepherds into the Country, given the Men independent Settlement there, and put the whole Power and Disposal of the Kingdom into their Hands, had hereby parted with an Authority and Trust that he could never resume, or bring to Account, without a general War, and sharp Contest between the two opposite Parties, the *native Egyptians*, and these *Hebrew Shepherds*, who must now be Competitors for the Government and Disposal of the Kingdom. The Shepherds, by the King's Authority and Consent, had possess'd themselves of all the Fortresses and Strong-Holds, which had been built in Granaries

naries and Store-Houses, the Governors and Officers of which had been named and appointed by *Joseph* under the King's own Commission.

How long this Harmony and good Understanding between the *Egyptians*, and their *Hebrew* Lords continued, or when the first Struggle began, is a Matter which the *Hebrew* Historian passes over in deep Silence. In the Course of 126 Years, or from the last Year of the Famine to the Birth of *Moses*, the Historian mentions but two remarkable Incidents which happened in *Egypt*. The first is, the Death of *Jaakob*, the Father of the Nation, 17 Years after the Descent into *Egypt*. He was carried, we find, out of *Egypt*, and buried in *Canaan* with his Wives, and his Father, Grandfather, and their Wives, in the Family Burying-Place. This he had left in Charge on his Death-Bed, and was accordingly done, with the greatest Funeral Pomp and magnificent Mourning that ever had been known in *Egypt*, even for the best of their own Kings.

Joseph was now 57 Years old, and though he had now the whole Power of the Kingdom in his Hands, yet he was so far wise enough to do nothing without consulting the King, and obtaining his Consent, as he did in this magnificent Interment of his Father. *Joseph* lived after this 53 Years, for he died at 110. But how long afterwards he kept

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his Interest at Court, or how long the *Egyptians* remained easy under the *Hebrew* Government, is not said. But this seems plain, that those *Hebrews*, who had been made the Lords and Rulers of *Egypt*, had lost all their Credit and Interest at the *Egyptian* Court before the Death of *Joseph*. We have seen, that *Jaakob* was carried into *Canaan*, and interred there in the Family Burying-Place, with all the Pomp, Solemnity, and Power of *Egypt*. But when *Joseph* died, he had only a private Interment, being embalmed, and laid up in a Chest in *Egypt*, without any Solemnity of a public Mourning, or national Concern discovered about it, *Chap.* 1. 26.

While *Joseph* kept his Interest at Court, and his *Hebrew* Brethren the Shepherds were in Possession of the chief Places of Power and Profit in the Kingdom, by a Commission from *Pharaoh* himself, we find no Talk, or the least Design or Intention of their leaving *Egypt*, and settling in *Canaan*. Not one Word of the Promise and Oath of God to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jaakob*, of giving them the everlasting peaceable Possession of that whole Land. Had this been any Part of the Design, while *Joseph* had the chief Government, and directed all Affairs at the *Egyptian* Court, and while this prime Minister had the whole Power of *Egypt* at his Command, that *not a Man could have lifted up his Hand or Foot without him*; how easily might he

he have settled his Nation in *Canaan*, while there could have been no Opposition against the whole Force of *Egypt*? But it could not be yet known, but the *Hebrews* might at last have conquered the *Egyptians*, and have either enslaved them, or driven them quite out of the Land, and therefore it was not yet Time to talk of another Country, or trump up any Pretence of a divine Right to *Canaan*. Besides, the *Canaanites* were not yet settled in the Land; but the inland mountainous Parts of the Country lay waste, and uncultivated, and were not worth conquering.

But *Joseph*, before he died, saw that there was no great Probability, or human Appearance, that the *Hebrews* should ever conquer *Egypt*, or gain any peaceable Settlement there. And, therefore, he let them know, that they must go back again into *Canaan*, and commanded them to remove his Bones thither, whenever that should happen, which yet was not till 140, or 145 Years after his Time.

It seems very plain, that *Abraham* himself, the Father of this *Hebrew* Shepherd Nation, had no original Design of settling in *Palestine*, but rather aim'd at *Egypt*.

When *Abram* came first into *Palestine*, he found it a very barren, desert Country, but little inhabited, and very subject to Drought and Scarcity. Such a Dearth and Famine happened in *Canaan* soon after his Arrival there. God, when he call'd him out of
Mesopo-

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Mesopotamia, had promised him a rich and plentiful Country, and to make him a great Nation. But *Palestine* seem'd a very unlikely Place, at this Time, for the Accomplishment of such a Promise; whereas *Egypt* was now the richest and most plentiful Kingdom in the World. And, as God had not yet named the Country where *Abram*, and his Posterity, should settle, *Egypt* might seem to be the most promising Place. And, therefore, *Abram* goes down with his Wife, Servants, Flocks, Herds, and whole Substance into *Egypt*, with a Design, as is evident, of settling there. But doubting the Beauty of *Sarah* his Wife might tempt the *Egyptians*, and create him some Trouble there, so as to occasion his Death for her Sake, or prevent his peaceable Settlement in that Country, he prevail'd on her to deny her being his Wife, and to say she was his Sister. So fond was this Patriarch of *Egypt*, so well persuaded, that this was the Country God had given him, that he was ready to prostitute his own Wife, and sacrifice her Chastity, to secure himself a Settlement there.

The Event soon proved, that the Patriarch had been right enough in his Guesses; for the *Egyptians* admired the Beauty of the Woman, and mentioned her to *Pharaoh*. But by some Means or other, the Thing came known to *Pharaoh* before he had taken to this *Hebrew* Woman, as his own Wife. Upon which

which the King sent for *Abram*, expostulated the Matter with him, represented, to him how great a Sin he had like to have drawn him into, and ordered the Servants to send the Patriarch, with his Wife, Servants, Cattle, and all that he had, out of the Country. As this shews the Craft and Design of the *Hebrew* Patriarch, so it equally discovers the strict Virtue, Honour, and Clemency of the *Egyptian* King, and is a plain Proof, that the *Egyptians*, at this Time, were Worshippers of the true God. The Reader will find this whole Story, as I have here represented it, in *Gen. xii.*

Abram being thus driven out of *Egypt*, and finding this was not the Country God had designed for him, goes back again into *Canaan*; so the Land is here call'd, because that was afterwards the Name of it, when the *Canaanites* came to settle there. The Patriarch was now exceeding rich in Flocks and Herds, Silver, Gold, numerous Servants, and all the Wealth of those Times. This Land of *Palestine*, or *Philistia*, for that was the original Name of it, was now in a Manner open, and uninhabited, as to the inland mountainous Parts of it, and the Plains of *Jordan*, which lay next to *Arabia*. And *Abram* and *Lot* having the whole Country before them, after some Debate, separated, *Abram* taking the Hills, and *Lot* the Plains. At this Time, the Plains, or Sea-Coasts of the

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the *Mediterranean*, from *Sidon* to the River *Sibor*, on the Borders of *Egypt*, were inhabited by the *Sidonians* and *Philistines*, who were Merchants, and made the first Settlements in this Part of *Asia*.

Abram being now upon the Mountains of *Palestine*, or *Philistia*, afterwards called the *Amorite* Mountains, from the *Canaanites*, God ordered him to look round, and survey the whole Country then in View, from the River *Jordan* to the great Sea, and promised to make of him a great Nation, and to settle his Posterity after him in the everlasting peaceable Possession of that whole Land. This Promise was afterwards repeated several Times to *Abraham*, and then to *Isaac* and *Jaakob*, absolutely, and under an Oath, as the *Hebrew* Historian assures us. But the Truth of it may very well be doubted, since no such Promise or Prophecy was ever made good; and God must have known very well, that he never intended any such Thing. And from what has been here observed, and might have been farther insisted on, it is plain enough, that whatever was afterwards trumped up about *Canaan*, and a Conquest and Settlement there, the real Design of this *Hebrew* Nation, from first to last, was upon *Egypt*.

Whoever will consider the Nature and Consequence of this Story, from first to last, must, I think, see, that these *Hebrew* Patriarchs,

archs, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jaakob*, had never any original Design of settling in *Palestine*; and, by the *Hebrew* Historian's own Account, when *Abraham* came from *Mesopotamia* westward, though God had promised him a Country, yet he did not know what Country, whether *Egypt*, *Canaan*, or any other. It appears very plainly, from what has been observed, that *Abraham's* first Attempt for a Settlement was in *Egypt*, and that he was driven out from thence, and forced to go back again into *Canaan*. But it is plain, that in his Return thither, he made no Provision for a Settlement there, or ever design'd it for his Posterity: He built no Towns or Cities, nor cultivated any Lands more than was necessary for Corn, and a present Supply. This was the Case of *Isaac* and *Jaakob* afterward; for though they were vastly rich, and superior in Force or Power to any Nation or Colony, then in *Canaan*; and though the whole Country was so open and free to them, that they possessed and occupied as much as they pleased of it for 290 Years; yet all this Time they made no Purchases, attempted no Conquests, nor discovered the least Design or Inclination of ever making it their own Country, or any fix'd, settled Habitation for themselves and Posterity. They contented themselves to be voluntary, free Sojourners, while they might have been Masters of the whole Country, had they thought

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fit. But the inland Parts of *Palestine* not having been yet cultivated, or possessed, lying open, desert, and very liable to Drought and Scarcity, it seems very plain, that these *Hebrew* Clans of strolling Shepherds, and Herdsmen, waited for a more favourable Opportunity, till Providence should direct them to some Country or other, where Towns and Cities had been built, the Lands cultivated for them, and all the Conveniences of Life ready provided to their Hands, without any Labour, and, consequently, without any natural Right or Title of their own. And this happened at last by a very lucky Incident for them, which brought them into a rich and plentiful Country, and made them Lords and Masters of it, after they had suffered great Hardships, and many Droughts and Dearth in *Canaan*, which was a Land now not worth conquering, purchasing, or possessing. How they came into *Egypt*, and by what Means they were received, succoured, and advanced there, has been already related; and this brings me back again to the same Story.

We have seen these *Hebrews* brought into *Egypt*, and establishing themselves there, as Lords of the Kingdom, not only without Opposition, but even by Invitation and Consent: We have seen them enslaving the whole Nation, engrossing all Places of Trust, either for Power or Profit, and just keeping the
Egyptians

inconsistent with Theocracy. 31

Egyptians alive for seven Years together, without allowing them Seed-Corn, till all the *Hebrew* Stores were exhausted, till the wretched enslav'd Nation had no Property left, and had no Money to bring in, no Flocks, Herds, Lands, or even their own Bodies to sell: We have seen too, that the great Credit and Influence of these *Hebrew* Shepherds in *Egypt* had been lost before the Death of *Joseph*. *Jaakob* had been honoured with the most public and magnificent Funeral, that ever had been before known; but *Joseph*, the Father and Deliverer of the Nation, was privately interr'd, without any public Ceremony, or Notice at all. How long after the Death of *Joseph* the *Egyptians* remained under this Bondage and Usurpation, and submitted themselves to their *Hebrew* Lords, is not said. The *Hebrew* Historian here skips over 60 or 65 Years in Silence, and as a Period of Time not at all to his Purpose; and only lets us know, that after these *Hebrew* Shepherds, or *the Children of Israel*, were increased in Abundance, and multiplied, and were become exceedingly mighty; so that the WHOLE LAND was full of them; that then there arose a new King in *Egypt*, that knew not *Joseph*. How long this was after the Death of *Joseph*, as the Historian has not thought fit to mention it, cannot be exactly determined, whether it might be five, ten, or twenty Years: But this new King said to his People,
Behold,

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Behold, the People of the Children of Israel are greater and mightier than we; and he said, Come let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that if there be War, they join themselves with our Enemies, and fight against us, and GET THEM OUT OF THE LAND.

Hitherto the *Hebrew* Historian had given us a fair Account, and thrown great Light upon profane History, how these eastern Shepherds came first into *Egypt*, not only without Opposition, but even by Invitation and Consent, and by what Means they settled and established themselves there, and obtained the great Strength and sole Management of the Nation, before the *Egyptians* apprehended any Danger; and while they considered them as the Fathers and Deliverers of the Country. But after the Opposition and Struggle began between the *Egyptians*, and these Shepherds, from this Time the Account of Matters in *Egypt*, as our Historian relates it, is very general and confused, inconsistent with itself, and contradictory to all the Remains of profane History, so far as it relates to the Affairs and State of *Egypt*.

One must suppose, from the Credit of the *Hebrew* Story, that after these eastern Shepherds had possess'd themselves of all the chief Places of Strength, and Posts of Power and Profit throughout the Kingdom, that the *Egyptians* conquered, suppressed, and enslaved them

them all at once, without a War, or any Opposition made by the *Israelites*. These humble, tame Shepherds, in full Possession as before, gave up their whole Power at Demand, and on Content, without any Opposition or Struggle to maintain their Authority, without supporting any Hopes they had ever conceived of establishing themselves in *Egypt*. This might look almost incredible, at first Sight; but pursuing the Matter a little farther, and comparing it with the Remains of profane Record still extant, will shew plainly, that the whole Story has been disguised, and misrepresented by the *Hebrew* Author.

From what has been above quoted, it is plain, that the *Egyptians* were in a very great Consternation, and under the utmost Dread of the growing Power of these Shepherds, who were now become *more, and mightier than they*. And, therefore, they contrive among themselves, not how to exterminate and root them out, to prevent farther Danger of being intirely conquered and enslaved by them, but how to keep them there, lest in Case of a foreign War, they should join the Enemy, and *get them out of the Country*. And, therefore, to keep these Strangers for ever in *Egypt* under perpetual Slavery, this *Pharaoh*, King of *Egypt*, first issues out an Order to the *Egyptian* Midwives, to kill every *Hebrew* Male Child in the Birth, whenever they should be call'd to do that Office for the

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Hebrew Women. But it is not very probable, that ever the *Egyptian* Midwives should be call'd on this Occasion to the *Hebrew Women*, or that the *Hebrews* had not Women enough of their own to deliver one another. But it is still more improbable, that two *Egyptian* Midwives should deliver all the *Hebrew Women* in the Country, when they were spread over all *Egypt*, and *the whole Land was full of them.* And yet we find, that this Order of the King of *Egypt*, was given only to two of the *Egyptian* Midwives, *Shiphrah* and *Puah*, thus to destroy all the *Hebrew Males* in the Birth, and save the Females alive, *Exod. i. 15—21.* But this Project not taking Effect, as it was impossible it should do, the King issues out a general Decree, which extended to all his *Egyptian* Subjects, that they should drown every *Hebrew Male Child* in the River: But this Decree could never be put in Execution. From whence it is plain, that these *Hebrews* were yet too strong for the *Egyptians*, and could bid Defiance to their utmost Efforts.

However, I hope, it is evident, from these two Decrees, that the Design of the *Egyptians*, at this Time, was utterly to destroy these *Hebrews*, and root them out of the Land, and not to keep such a vast Number of Slaves, who, in Case of foreign War, would be ready to join the Enemy, make an intire absolute Conquest of the Land, and either
exterminate

exterminate the *Egyptians* themselves, or enslave them in their own Country. That this was what the *Egyptians* feared, is evident from the whole Story, as the *Hebrew* Author himself relates it. And we find, that notwithstanding all the Power and Policy of *Egypt*, to root out and destroy these Shepherds, and rid the Country of so dangerous and threatening an Enemy, the *Hebrews* were able to keep their Ground, and maintain themselves in this Country for 80 Years after the Birth of *Moses*.

How long before the Birth of *Moses* this Struggle and Opposition between the *Egyptians* and *Hebrews* began, is not said; but it is highly probable, it must have been for some considerable Course of Years, 30 or 40 at least. For, by this Time, the *Egyptians* had gained Ground upon their former Lords and Masters; they had subdued as many of them as lived in the open Country, and could not be received and protected in the Strong-Holds and fortified Towns, which they had been at first put into Possession of by Consent, while they were regarded as the Saviours and Deliverers of the Country.

It could have been nothing else, but these Fortresses and Strong-Holds, to which they had a free Resort, and might be protected in Case of Need; nothing else, I say, could have hindered the Decrees to have been put in Execution, which had doom'd all the

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Males to Destruction, as soon as born. But in Spite of these severe Decrees, of all the Advantages hitherto gained in the open Country, and all the Efforts of *Egypt*, now struggling for their antient Liberty and Independence, these *Hebrew* Shepherds, thus established, maintained their Ground, and kept their Footing, for at least 80 Years longer; though, perhaps, this Decree of *Pharaoh's*, for the Destruction of all the *Hebrew* Male Children, might have been issued out 15 or 20 Years before the Birth of *Moses*. But, however that might be, it was certainly in Force then, and yet the *Egyptians* had not Power enough to put it in Execution.

Amidst this Opposition and War between the *Egyptians* and *Hebrews*, *Moses* is born, and was providentially preserved from drowning by *Pharaoh's* Daughter, and put to Nurse to his own Mother; and, at a proper Age, or as soon as he came from Nurse, the *Egyptian* Princess took to him, and he was educated and brought up for 40 Years at *Pharaoh's* Court, and thoroughly instructed in all the Wisdom and Learning of *Egypt*.

During this Time, it does not appear, that *Moses* himself had any Design of leaving *Egypt*, or conducting his Nation into any other Country. He continued an *Egyptian* Courtier, and had gained high Reputation for his Learning and Skill in Magic. But what forced him at last to fly out of *Egypt*, and seek

seek Succour in another Country, was a mere Accident. In Vindication of a *Hebrew*, he had murder'd an *Egyptian*, which Murder he thought to have concealed. But this happening to be discovered, and coming to *Pharaoh's* Ear, he was much enraged at the Barbarity of the Act, and would have put the Murderer to Death. This obliged *Moses* to fly the Country, into the Land of *Midian*. Here likewise he had very good Luck, for he married the Prince, or Priest of *Midian's* Daughter, where he was fed, succoured, and lived in great Credit and Reputation for 40 Years longer. All this Time *Moses* seems to have had no Thoughts or Design of returning to *Egypt*, or bringing out his Countrymen from thence. The Affairs of the *Israelites*, or *Hebrew* Shepherds, were not yet grown desperate; but they might still conceive some Hopes of gaining the Point of the *Egyptians*, and settling there. But now, when *Moses* had been out of *Egypt* full 40 Years, the Affairs of the *Israelites* there were grown quite desperate. The *Egyptians* had so far prevailed over them now, that if some Way or other could not have been found out to bring them off, they must have been all destroy'd, and cut to Pieces there right. See *Exod. ii.* throughout.

Moses now undertakes a desperate Enterprize for the Deliverance of his Country, and for establishing a Kingdom of his own Na-

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tion, in which the supream Power should be lodged irrevocably, and for ever, in his own Tribe and Family. To this Purpose he revives an antient Grant from God, to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jaakob*, in which God had promised, and sworn to settle their Posterity quietly and peaceably, in the Land of *Canaan*, as an everlasting Inheritance for them at the End of 400 Years, from the Birth of *Isaac*; at the End of these 400 Years, they were, upon the solemn Promise and Oath of God, to be put into the Possession of the whole Land, so far as *Abraham* could see, when he was upon one of the highest Mountains of *Palestine*, i. e. they were to inherit the Land, from the River *Jordan* to the great Sea, or *Mediterranean*, in Breadth, and from *Zidon*, to the Borders of *Egypt*, in Length. This was the Promise and Oath from God, which *Moses*, as a Politician, set out upon. But as God never made good this Promise and Oath, as they never were in Possession of this whole Land, nor much above half of it; and as they could never set a Foot upon, or make themselves Masters of any one Town in it, till 40 Years after the 400 Years of Promise were expir'd; as all this is very clear and undeniable, it may reasonably be presumed, that this was now only trump up to serve a Turn, and to animate the People with such a Resolution and Courage in the Conquest, as so strong a Security of Success

cess might inspire them with. *Moses* is confessedly the antientest Writer we have now extant; and, therefore, this Story of God's Promise and Oath to *Abraham* must rest entirely on his Authority, who had a visible Interest in reporting it, and getting it believed. But if the Event here did not prove the contrary, I think it is impossible, that any Event in the World should ever prove a false Prophecy, or forged Commission.

Moses having received full Powers, and clear Credentials of his Commission from God, and *Aaron*, his Brother, being appointed as his Prophet and Spokesman, they went to *Pharaoh*, and demanded the Dismissal of the *Hebrews*, and that they might be suffered to depart out of the Land freely and peaceably, without any Opposition or Hindrance. But this being denied, the Historian goes on to relate the Plagues which God brought upon *Egypt*, and the Signs and Wonders wrought there by the Hands of *Moses* and *Aaron*. The Reader will find the Story at large from the 5th to the 14th Chapter of *Exodus*. The whole Story, as here related, might afford ample Matter for Criticism, and would scarce find Credit in any profane Historian. But I shall only make a few general Remarks upon it, as presuming the *Hebrew* Author might be no more infallible than other Historians.

And here it is observable, that *Moses* wrought all these Wonders in *Egypt* by his conjuring

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Rod, or magic Wand, in the same Manner that the *Egyptian* Sorcerers plaid their magic Tricks, deluded the Ignorant, amazed Vulgars, and pretended to a supernatural, miraculous Power. No one can imagine, or think it at all credible, that the *Egyptians*, Priests, and Sorcerers, could really turn a Rod into a Serpent, or actually, and in Fact, create a living Creature; that they could really turn all the Water of the River into Blood, or that they could produce Frogs *de novo*, or bring them up immediately, and at Command, out of the River, so as to cover the whole Country, and fill the Houses, by the Shaking of a Wand: To believe that these Things were really and actually done by the *Egyptian* Magicians, and that they could do such Things by the Virtue of their magic Wands, or conjuring Rods, is beyond all human Faith. And yet these Sorcerers did these Things as much as *Moses* himself, and for which we have the same Authority of the *Hebrew* Historian. And though *Moses* went farther, and work'd more Wonders by his conjuring Rod, than they could by theirs, yet this can only prove, that he was a greater Master of the Art, but not that all was not owing to the same magic Delusion.

It may be observed farther, that the Plagues here mentioned, as miraculously and almost instantaneously brought only by the shaking or waving a Rod or Wand, have been always,

ways, and are to this Day, the common Calamities of *Egypt*, as arising from natural Causes. Upon any extraordinary Inundation of the *Nile*, when the Waters, in an excessive Quantity, are left to stagnate and putrify, in the remote inland Parts of the Country, and cannot be carried off into the Rivers; this Stagnation and Putrefaction bred all Sorts of noxious Vermin, so as to fill the Country with them, destroy the Fruits of the Earth, and occasion the most contagious Distempers on Man and Beast; and such especially, as the Historian mentions, among these *Egyptian* Plagues. Our *Hebrew* Author indeed relates all this with such Circumstances, as must make those Calamities look altogether supernatural and miraculous, as if brought on by the immediate Hand and Power of God, without the Intervention of any natural Cause at all. But this will be the less surprising to any one who considers, the *Hebrew* Historians constantly speak in the same Air and Strain, by ascribing the most common and natural Events to supernatural Causes, and immediate Interpositions. They lived and wrote in Ages of great Ignorance and Darkness, when the general Laws of God's Government, either in the natural, or moral World, were very little, or not all understood: And they continually accommodate themselves, in all their Writings, to the Ignorance, Superstition, and gross Apprehensions

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of the Vulgar. Their Populace could be influenced and governed by nothing but Miracles, Prodigies, Prophecy, Revelation, and other such like strong Impressions of supernatural Powers. They knew nothing of the eternal, immutable Goodness, or intrinsic, unalterable Fitness of Actions, but had received even their moral Laws, as positive Institutions. And their Historians accommodating themselves to this vulgar Prejudice, if we should understand and interpret them too literally, according to the Philosophy and Theology now prevailing, we must conclude, that they had scarce any such Thing as natural Causes, or common Providence among them; but that every Thing relating to that Nation was brought about by Miracles, supernatural Powers, and immediate, occasional Interpositions, for many hundred Years together. But as God is always the same, and his general Laws of Government the same, both in the natural and moral World, it is wonderful to find so many learned Men, at this Time a-day, inverting all those general Laws of Nature and Providence, and struggling so hard to bring us back again to the old *Egyptian* and *Jewish* Ignorance and Superstition: But all the clearer Light of Truth, and more certain Knowledge of the Laws of God and Providence in these modern Times, must now, it seems, pass only for Design, Irreligion, and Infidelity, with those whose Business

ness it is to take Care of our Souls, and direct us right in the Way to Salvation.

The Birth and Education of *Moses*, and his having been thoroughly instructed in all the Learning, Laws, Religion, and Policy of *Egypt*, for the first 40 Years of his Life, will sufficiently account for the Constitution of his own Law and Manner of Government afterward. Natural Magic, or occult, experimental Philosophy, had been carry'd at this Time in *Egypt* to a great Height. And in this, no Doubt, but *Moses*, with all the Advantages he had above others, must have made great Improvements, beyond what was commonly known to Priests, Magicians, and wise Men in general. All such Knowledge in *Egypt* was sacred, and never to be divulged or discovered to the profane, astonished Vulgar. By this Means the Priests maintained their Authority with the People, and impress'd them with a strong, indubitable Belief or Persuasion, that they were endu'd with supernatural, miraculous, and divine Powers; and that they maintained and kept up a free and intimate Inter-course and Communication with the Gods. They influenced and governed all publick Affairs, nothing of Consequence could be undertaken or resolved upon without them, and their Judgment and Decisions were taken and considered as oracular, and the certain Decrees of Heaven.

This

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This was the Constitution and State of Things under which *Moses* had been born and brought up, and which he afterward farther improv'd by 40 Years Retirement, and with the additional Advantage of all the Knowledge and Experience in this Way, of another great Politician, the Prince and Priest of *Midian*, whose Daughter he had married. Here it was, probably, in *Midian*, that *Moses* learned the Use of Letters, and the Art of writing in Books, and cutting or engraving in Stone. These Arts the *Idumeans*, *Midianites*, and Merchants of the Red Sea understood in the Days of *Job*, who was confessedly before *Moses*. But it does not appear, that the *Egyptians* had the Use of Letters so early, or in several Ages. After all their Learning had been conceal'd and lock'd up in Hieroglyphics, which none but the Priests could understand.

Moses, by all this Experience and Acquisitions of Knowledge, both at Home and Abroad, must needs have made the greatest Improvements in this Sort of occult Philosophy, on which all the Power and Interest of Princes and Priests depended: He must have observed, how necessary and useful an Engine of popular Government it was, that the People should be strongly impress'd with the Notion and Belief of their Governors having immediate, intimate Communication with the superior cœlestial Powers, and their
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being the principal Favourites of Heaven. As this had been the Plan of Government in *Egypt* by which the People had been be-fool'd and enslav'd, and kept in Subjection to the Church and Crown, the *Hebrew* Politician did not fail making his Advantage of it, when he came to form a Government of his own, in which the supream Power was to be eternally and immutably fix'd, and establish'd, in his own Tribe and Family.

But I must now return to the History relating to the Plagues of *Egypt*, and the Manner of *Israel's* being delivered out of it. The turning the River into Blood, and filling the whole Land with Frogs, having had no Effect upon *Pharaoh*, and the *Egyptians*, since their own Magicians could do the same, a more terrible Judgment follow'd, by converting all the Dust of *Egypt* into *Lice*. *Aaron stretched out his Hand with his Rod, and smote the Dust of the Earth, and Lice came upon Man, and upon Beast; all the Dust of the Earth was Lice* throughout all the Land of *Egypt*, Chap. viii. 17. This was what the Magicians could not imitate, and therefore were forced to confess it to be the Finger of God. But *Pharaoh* believed nothing of the Matter, and still refused to let the People go. Perhaps the King might not believe, that all the Dust in *Egypt* was really turned into *Lice*; and had this been so, how should his own Magicians create any more *Lice*,
when

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when they had no Dust left, or Matter to make the Experiment upon, all being Lice before?

The next Plague was vast Swarms of Flies, which infested Man and Beast, and filled all the Houses of the *Egyptians* in one Day, while there was not a Fly in *Goshen*, or that Part of the Country, where the *Israelites* dwelt. This had such an Effect upon *Pharaoh*, that he would have suffered them to have offered their Sacrifices in *Egypt*, where they were; which they refused to do, because this would have been offering the Abomination of the *Egyptians* before their Eyes, and then the *Egyptians* would rise upon them, and stone them; and, therefore, they demanded Leave to go out quietly, and without any Lett or Opposition, for three Days, into the Wilderness; which was not granted. It may be observed here, that the *Egyptians* eat no Flesh, nor offered any Sacrifices of living Creatures; and, therefore, the *Hebrews* were detestable to them, as Flesh-eaters, and the *Egyptians* would never come near them, or suffer them to eat and drink at their Tables.

This Plague of Flies being immediately remov'd by one Wave of the Wand upon *Pharaoh's* Request to *Moses*, the King still persisted in his Obstinacy, and would not suffer the People to depart in Peace, which brought another most terrible Plague, a universal Murrain, which broke out the next Day upon all
the

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the Sheep, Cattle, Horses, Asses, and Camels of *Egypt*, and which destroy'd them all, while the *Israelites* in *Goshen* lost not one. *All the Cattle of Egypt died, but of the Cattle of the Children of Israel died not one*, Chap. ix.

6. But *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians* were not yet convinced, that God was on the Side of *Moses* and *Aaron*, or that they could carry their People safe out of the Land. The sixth Plague, which was inflicted the next Day, was a blistering Scab, which broke the very next Morning, upon Man and Beast, throughout all the Land of *Egypt*: The Malignity of this corrosive Scab was so great, that the *Sorcerers themselves could not stand before Moses, because of the Scabs, for the Scab was upon the Inchanters, and upon all the Egyptians*, Chap. ix. 11. It is here observable, that this Malignity fell upon Man and *Beast*, though all the Beasts in *Egypt*, their Sheep, their Cattle, Horses, Asses, and Camels, had been destroy'd but a Day or two before with the *Murrain*. But *Pharaoh*, and his Servants, not being yet convinced, a seventh Plague was sent a Day or two after, which was the most dreadful Storm of Rain, Hail, and Thunder, that ever had been known: But of this the *Egyptians* seem to have had a whole Day's Warning. For *Moses* acquainting *Pharaoh* the Day before what would happen on the Morrow, advises to send and get in his Sheep, Cattle, and all they had in the Field,

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since the Hail and Thunder would destroy every Thing, both Man and Beast, that should be found in the open Fields. Upon this Warning, some of the *Egyptians*, such as feared the Lord among the Servants of *Pharaoh*, made their Servants and Cattle take Shelter and Security in the Houses: But such of them as minded not the Threatning left their Servants and Cattle in the Field, where they all perished. This is the third Time that all the Cattle and Beasts of *Egypt* were destroy'd; for they had all perish'd but a few Days before with the Murrain; yet now, it seems, they had them again, and saved as many of them as they brought in out of the Fields, and had secured in Houses, before this terrible Tempest arose, *Chap. ix. 18. to the End.*

The next Judgment was, the Plague of Grasshoppers, which *Moses* threatned should be brought in the next Day, which should cover the whole Face of the Earth, fill all the Houses of the *Egyptians*, and destroy every Plant, Vegetable, and Blade of Grass or Herbage of every Sort, which the Hail had left. This was accordingly done; but, as soon as *Moses* had remov'd the Plague, which he could do at any Time, as easily and as soon as he could inflict it, the King hardened his Heart again, and went off from his Word. Upon this Plague of the Grasshoppers, *Pharaoh* sent for *Moses* and
Aaron

Aaron again, to know their whole and full Demands. And *Pharaoh* said, *Go serve the Lord your God; but who are they that shall go?* Upon this they demanded to go out peaceably and unmolested, with their Wives, Children, Flocks, Herds, and their whole Substance, so as to leave nothing behind them; but the King of *Egypt* did not yet think himself reduced to any such Necessity, and therefore received their bold and insolent Demand with Contempt and Scorn: He bid them *Go, you that are Men*, and serve the Lord; for that, said he, *was your Desires*, or utmost Demand hitherto. But *Pharaoh* told them, that as to their going out of *Egypt* with their Wives and Children, their Sheep and Cattle, their Bag and Baggages, and all that they had got in the Land, it should not be, and if they insisted on that, they might look to themselves, for *Evil was before them*; and then they were thrust out from the Presence of *Pharaoh*. This happened before the Plague of the Grasshoppers had been brought on; and when *Moses* had only threatned it. But upon the King's Obstinaey, and dealing so roughly with *Moses*, the Judgment was executed. For by a mighty strong East-Wind, which blew all that Night, and the next Day, the Grasshoppers were brought over the whole Land, and the Judgment executed, to the great Amazement and Terror of the *Egyptians*. The King now saw his Mistake, and

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calling

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calling in Haste for the two Brothers, own'd his Sin, and promised to grant them their own Terms and full Demands. Upon this *Moses*, by praying to the Lord, brought on a mighty strong *West-Wind*, which immediately carried off all the Locusts, or Grasshoppers, and swept them out of every House, and every Creek and Corner of the Land, into the *Red Sea*. But still *Pharaoh's* Heart was hardened, and he continued as obstinate as ever, as soon as the Plague was remov'd, and it could not be otherwise, because the *Lord had hardened his Heart*. But *Pharaoh* now relents a little, and would give them Leave to go out with their Wives, and Children, to serve the Lord in the Wilderness, only they should leave their Sheep and Cattle behind them: But *Moses* and *Aaron* still persisted on their full Demand, which so enraged the King, that he commanded them out of his Presence, and forbid them, at their Peril, ever to see his Face more. For all which, I must refer the Reader to *Exod. x. 1, &c.*

The next and ninth Plague brought upon *Egypt*, was thick palpable Darkness, which continued for three Days, during which Time no Man could rise out of his Seat, nor move from his Place, but the *Egyptians* were all pinn'd down like so many Statues: But in the mean while, in the Province of *Goshen*, where the *Israelites* were, it was very fair,

fair, clear Weather, and no Appearance of Darkneſs at all; and tho' the Darkneſs in this Caſe muſt have come as near to them, as a boundary Stone between two Hundreds or Counties, yet they were not ſenſible of it; nor had the *Egyptians* all this while any Power of lighting Fire or Candles, or moving out of their Place. For this muſt be ſuppoſed, or the Credit of the Hiſtorian muſt be loſt.

Hitherto we find the *Iſraelites* had gain'd no Ground. After all theſe Plagues and Demonſtrations of divine Power, *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians* continued reſolute, and were determined not to let theſe *Hebrew* Shepherds go with Conſent, and under Safe-guard, out of the Land. They had offered them, at firſt, that all the Males ſhould go out, who were the only Plague they wanted to get rid of. And afterwards they would have let their Women and Children go with them, but now they riſe upon their Demands. They would go with all their Flocks and Herds, and would not leave a Hoof behind them. I only deſire it may be taken Notice of here, that this was never granted them, as will appear by the tenth and laſt Plague, which I am now to relate.

All the other Plagues having taken no Effect, and the *Iſraelites* being ſtill more and more diſtreſs'd, and brought to the laſt Extremity, the laſt and finiſhing Plague is now reſolved on, and declared by *Moſes* and *Aaron*

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to *Pharaoh*. All the First-born of *Egypt* were to perish in one Night, from *Pharaoh's* House, to the meanest Subject in the Land, *Chap. xi.* But, in the mean while, every Thing is contriv'd and order'd for a Flight; the Passover is instituted, the whole People are let know, that they are to leave the Land all together in the Dead of the Night, and without staying to contest the Matter with the *Egyptians* any farther. They could not, by all the former Struggles and Appearances of God on their Side, obtain a Pass or Safe-guard out of *Egypt*; and, therefore, now being reduced to the last Extremity, they must take another Way for it. But this Judgment or Plague being executed, and all the First-born of *Egypt* slain in one Night, both of Man and Beast, the grand Point was now gain'd; and *Pharaoh* call'd *Moses* and *Aaron* by Night, and allow'd them to go off with their Wives, Children, Cattle, and their whole Substance; nay, the *Egyptians* dreaded so much what worse Consequences might happen, and that after the First-born all the rest might perish, that they even thrust them out, and gave them whatever Gold, Silver, Jewels, or Ear-Rings they ask'd, only to get rid of them.

How far the *Hebrew* Historian here agrees with himself, or with any Remains of profane Story, may be farther considered afterwards. I shall, at present, only remark what

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is own'd, and for which I have the Authority and Testimony of the *Hebrew* Author himself.

It is very plain then, from what lies before us, that this Exodus of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, was sudden, and had been resolv'd upon in one Day, without giving *Pharaoh*, or his Servants, any Notice. They were all appriz'd of it just before, that they could stay in *Egypt* no longer, and that they must get off that very Night. They went off in the Dead of the Night, and with such a Distraction and Hurry, that they had not Time to *leaven their Dough, to sit at Table*, or to observe any of the common Formalities of Eating and Drinking. This sudden and unexpected Flight gave them an Opportunity of gaining a Day or two's March on the *Egyptians*, before they could get an Army ready to pursue them, which might give them a Chance of saving their Lives, and prevent their being all put to the Sword, where they were. That this was the Case, that they did not go off by Consent, but fled for their Lives, is very plain, from the Resolution of *Pharaoh*, to pursue them, and prevent, if possible, their Escape.

The *Hebrew* Author here suggests, and would have it believ'd, that the Design of this Pursuit was to bring them back again, and retain them in the Country as Slaves, and not to put them to the Sword, and destroy

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them all at once, to prevent any farther Danger from them. But in this the Historian contradicts himself, and the Consequence of the Story, from first to last. For, 'tis very plain, from what has been observed from this Author, that the *Egyptians*, for at least 80 Years past, had concerted and aimed at exterminating and destroying all the *Hebrew* Males, because they were grown too numerous and mighty, and, consequently, might one Day or other conquer the Country, and either expel or enslave the *Egyptians*, especially if they should take an Opportunity of joining with a foreign Enemy. That this had been the Policy and concerted Design of the Court of *Egypt*, from before the Birth of *Moses*, is, I think, unquestionable, from the *Hebrew* Historian's own Authority. *Pharaoh*, before this sudden, unexpected Flight, had forbid *Moses* and *Aaron* his Presence, resolved never to give them another Audience, and told them, that *Evil was before them*, and they might look to themselves.

From this Time, we may see plainly, that the Destruction of the *Hebrews*, especially the Males, had been resolv'd upon; and that *Pharaoh* thought he had it now in his Power, and that they could have no human Appearance of escaping. He could not imagine, that his own People, the Populace, or common People of *Egypt* themselves, would favour their Escape, and assist in getting them
off

off before the Morning. And yet so it was, whatever the *Egyptians* had suffered from them, while they were in their full Power and Prosperity, under the Administration of *Joseph*; though they had been then absolutely ruin'd, enslav'd, and stript of all Property, even in Money, Goods, or Liberty, and made perpetual Vassals to the Crown; and though after this, these *Hebrews*, not content with their first Settlement in *Goshen*, had over-run every other Province of *Egypt*, and *the whole Land was full of them*, so as to threaten an intire Conquest of the Country: Yet now when the Government after a long Struggle had got the better of them, when they had drove them up into a small Part of their antient Settlement in *Goshen*, and when the Matter was come to such an Extremity, that they were all to be cut off, and destroyed the very next Day; natural Compassion moved the *Egyptians*, the *common People*, to pity them, and to assist them in their Escape all at once, and in the Middle or Dead of the Night. By this Means they might possibly gain a Day or two's March, before *Pharaoh* could get ready to pursue them with an Army; and hereby, the Red Sea being near, and *Moses* being thoroughly acquainted with its Coast, and with all the Avenues and Passes among the Mountains, they might happen to save themselves, and avert the imminent Danger and impending Destructions. To this Purpose the *Egypt-*

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tian Populace hurried them, with all imaginable Haste and Precipitation, and gave them Money, Jewels, Rings, and what was valuable, and easily portable, to supply them with such Necessaries as they might want in their Journey, and before they could come to any certain fix'd Settlement. The Text says, the *Israelites borrowed* of the *Egyptians* Jewels of Gold, Silver, Raiment, &c. Some learned Men having mistaken the Sense of this Passage, have broken the Sense of the Story, and given a wrong Notion of the Matter. The *Hebrew* Word *Sbaal*, which we render *to borrow*, signifies to ask, pray, or petition: It is the same Word which is used *Psal. ii. 8. Ask of me, and I will give the Heathen for thy Inheritance, &c. Sbaal ve ettenah.* The true Sense of the Passage, therefore, is, that the *Egyptian* Populace, out of Pity and Compassion, hurried them off as fast as they could, favoured and assisted their Escape in the Dead of the Night, and gave them what might be necessary, and all that they could supply them with in such an Exigence, that they might not perish in the Wilderness, or want Necessaries till they could come to some Settlement, and make a better Provision for themselves: And that these *Hebrews*, notwithstanding all past Injuries, had been kindly treated by the People, at their leaving *Egypt*, will be farther evident, from the great Fondness they often discovered afterwards, to go back thither again, which

which *Moses*, with all his Art, had much a-do to prevent.

But I shall now suppose them miraculously pass'd the Red Sea, with their Wives, Children, Flocks, Herds, &c. without leaving so much as a Hoof behind them; that *Pharaoh* and his Host, the Strength and Flower of *Egypt*, had been all drowned in pursuing them, and that all the Sheep, Cattle, and Beasts of *Egypt*, together with all the Corn, Grass, and Fruits of the Earth had been destroy'd just before they came away. In this Case, surely *Egypt*, thus ruined, wasted, and depopulated, must have been left a very undesirable Country, and a more uncomfortable Habitation, than even the Wilderness itself. And yet the very same Day Month that *Moses* had brought them out of *Egypt*, the whole Congregation of *Israel*, or Body of the People, were all in an Uproar, clamouring, mutinying, and ready to stone their Deliverers, *Moses* and *Aaron*, for bringing them out of so rich and plentiful a Country, where they had Bread and Flesh to full, into so barren a Desert, where they had neither Bread nor Flesh, and had no other Prospect, but to perish with Famine. To silence this Murmur, and appease the enrag'd People, God now furnishes them miraculously with Manna and Quails, which were to serve them for Bread and Flesh, to keep them from perishing in the Wilderness, where they could have no other

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other Sustenance, and had nothing else to eat. The Account of this miraculous Preservation in the Desert, without any of the Bread or Flesh, of which they had Plenty in *Egypt*, the Reader will find in *Exodus* xvi. throughout.

I would here ask, what was now become of all those vast Flocks and Herds of Sheep and Cattle which they brought out of *Egypt* with them, and of which they had not lost an Hoof, while all the Sheep and Cattle in *Egypt* had been destroy'd, and were perish'd in the Plague? Were all the Sheep and Cattle of the *Israelites* drown'd, together with *Pharaoh* and his Host, in the Red Sea, that they had now no Provisions, or Sustenance at all, but what they were miraculously supply'd with? Or could they think to mend the Matter much, by going back again into a Country, which they had left quite desolate and barren, without Sheep, Cattle, Grass, Herbage, or any Thing else? But this confirms what I had observ'd before, that the *Israelites* did not at last gain their Point; that they did not go out of *Egypt* with all their Substance, Flocks, and Herds; and that the kind *Egyptian* Populace had hurry'd them out with the utmost Precipitation, and furnish'd them with what they could, just for the present, to save them from the Slaughter and Destruction then impending, and which had been resolv'd upon the very next Day.

This

This Murmuring for Bread and Flesh, and the miraculous Supply of Manna and Quails, to prevent a Famine, was in the Wilderness of *Sin*. Their next Incampment was at *Rephidim*, where they mutiny again, for want of Water. *Wherefore, say they to Moses, hast thou brought us out of Egypt to kill us, and our Children, and our Cattle, with Thirst? Exod. xvii. 3. And again, more fully, Numb. xx. 2, 3, 4, 5. And they assembled themselves against Moses, and against Aaron. And the People chod with Moses, and spake, saying, Would to God we had perished when our Brethren died before the Lord. Why have ye thus brought the Congregation of the Lord into this Wilderness, that both we, and our Cattle, should die there. Wherefore now have ye made us to come out of Egypt, to bring us into this horrid Place, which is no Place of Seed, nor Figs, nor Vines, nor Pomegranates, neither is there here any Water.* Here we see, that they had changed their Condition much for the worse; that *Moses* had brought them out of a rich and plentiful Country, into a desolate, barren Wilderness, where they wanted all the common Necessaries of Life; and that though they had been at last forc'd to serve the *Egyptians*, yet they had never been reduc'd to any great Extremity, or wanted any Thing there, till *Moses* and *Aaron* attempted to bring them out of the Land, upon such Terms as *Pharaoh*,

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raab, and the *Egyptian* Court, were resolv'd never to grant.

In the last Incampment, the People were all ready to perish with Famine, as we have seen: They had no Bread, nor *Flesh*, but what they were miraculously supply'd with in *Manna* and *Quails*: They had, therefore, then no Sheep, or Cattle; no Flocks, or Herds; and, consequently, wish'd themselves back again at the *Flesh-Pots* of Egypt. But now, it seems, they had their Flocks and Herds again, which were like to perish for want of Water: They could not, therefore, now complain for want of the common, ordinary *Flesh*, Beef and Mutton, though they had nothing of that Kind a Day before at *Sin*. But the *Hebrew* Author never regards any literal Truth, or Consistency of Story: He was to relate nothing but Miracles, as best agreeing with the Temper and Genius of a People so grossly ignorant and superstitious, who could receive and swallow every Thing of that Kind.

It will be allow'd, that even a Dramatick Writer, in all his Invention and poetic Imagry, ought to keep up the Appearance of Probability; and so, no Doubt, did the *Hebrew* Historian, with Regard to the People, for whom he wrote; and to whom nothing was improbable, that was but supernatural, absurd, or contradictory enough.

As *Moses* had miraculously supply'd this People with Bread and *Flesh*, but a few Days

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Days before, when they had otherwise perished with Famine, and had nothing to subsist on, he now must work another Miracle to supply them with Water, when they must otherwise have perished with Thirst. And here *Moses*, by striking the Rock twice with his Rod, made Water gush out of it in abundance, sufficient to satisfy the People, and all their Cattle: This must, doubtless, at first appear as great a Miracle to the *Israelites*, as any that *Moses* had hitherto wrought: And yet, by this stupendous Work, *Moses* and *Aaron* forfeited their Entrance into *Canaan*, and had almost lost all their Interest and Reputation with the People. The *Israelites*, while in *Egypt*, had never seen any fresh Water Springs, or Water flowing out of the Rocks, to supply the Rivers. They had all their Water, which supplied all the Cities and Towns of *Egypt*, by Canals, cut from the *Nile*; but they knew nothing of the Origin and Formation of Rivers, or that they arose from a Concourse of innumerable smaller Streams and Rivulets derived from the inland Fountains, which issued out of the Rocks. *Moses* and *Aaron*, therefore, had now a fair Opportunity of working a wonderful Miracle, and demonstrating the divine, supernatural Power and Virtue of their inspired Rod, or magic Wand. This was a good Shift for the Time, and answered two very extraordinary Purposes under the present

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sent Exigence. In the first Place, to quiet the Tumult, and stop the farther Rage of the People, in which the divine Missionaries might have been torn to Pieces; and then, at the same Time, to give a farther Demonstration of their Mission from God, and thereby strengthen their own Authority, at least for the present. But the Credit of this Miracle could not last long; for, as the People were now brought into the mountainous Part of the Country, they must soon find, that the Flowing of Water out of the Rocks, was not owing to any supernatural Power, or Skill of *Moses*, or to any extraordinary Virtue of the Rod or Wand, by which they did such Wonders; but that this was the common Work of God and Nature, and that *Moses* and *Aaron* could not afterwards, by the Virtue of their Rod, bring Water out of every Rock. 'Tis easy to guess, what an Effect this must have had upon the People, and the Story afterward plainly shews it, for the Historian could not disguise it.

The People were now come to the South End of the *Amorite* Mountains, which lay nearest to *Egypt*. Here they attempted to penetrate into *Canaan*, and to this Purpose they had a pitch'd Battle with the *Amalekites*, which lasted a whole Day, till Sun-set: This Battle seems to have been very obstinate and bloody on both Sides; sometimes the one prevailed and repulsed the Enemy, and sometimes

times the other. But the Historian must make a Miracle here too; for *when Moses held up his Hand, Israel prevailed; but when he let it down, Amalek prevailed.* But when *Moses's Hands* grew heavy, that he could hold them up no longer, they sat him upon a Stone, and *Aaron and Hur*, one on one Side, and the other on the other Side, held up his Hands, till *the Going down of the Sun.* So *Israel*, it seems, kept the Field, and discomfited *Amalek*, for which they made Rejoicings, and kept that Day in perpetual Remembrance, vowing the utter Destruction of the *Amalekites*, whenever they should have it in their Power, *Exod. xvii. 8.* to the End. But, it is plain, that *Israel*, in this Battle, had no Reason to boast; for, in so long and bloody a Fight, their Loss must have been very considerable; though they kept the Field, as the *Hebrew Historian* tells, yet they had been so far disheartened, that *Moses* could never afterward engage them in another Battle against any Tribe of the *Canaanites*. The People now saw, that they were not to be put peaceably into the Possession of *Canaan*, and the Lord was not so far with them, as to settle them there in a miraculous Way. The 400 Years of the Promise, from the Birth of *Isaac*, or the 430, from the first Promise made to *Abraham* in *Mesopotamia*, were now expired, and they had no present Prospect of *Canaan*, after they had been brought out of *Egypt*.
Moses,

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Moses, therefore, was now forced to stay in the Wilderness almost 40 Years longer, till that whole Generation was gone off, and he had raised up another better disciplined, more inured to Hardships, and that might not have so strong a Dependence on a miraculous Conquest, or imagine that the Lord, in Consequence of his Promise and Oath to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jaakob*, would do every Thing for them. Thus was this great Politician defeated in the Beginning of his Attempt, and never lived to set a Foot on the promised Land himself, though he out-lived the Promises, and his own Declarations upon them 40 Years.

Moses seem'd now to have been almost at the End of his Politicks: He had fail'd in his first grand Attempt of penetrating into the Country; the People grew diffident of him, and he could scarce make them believe any longer, that the Lord was with them. Under this Difficulty and Distress, *Jethro* his Father-in-Law came to visit him, and put him into a better Way of governing the People, and managing Affairs. He had hitherto taken the whole Weight of the Government upon himself, and the People had no other to resort to for Judgment, and Advice, in any Case: He advis'd him to appoint proper Officers, and Judges, over distinct Bodies and Divisions of the People, who might ease him, and take off the Weight of Business from him in all ordi-

ordinary Cases, and that he might only be appeal'd to in the most extraordinary Matters. This was certainly very good Advice, and accordingly complied with; though the Lord, or Jehovah himself, had never put *Moses* into this Way; but he had thought, that the smallest Matters, as well as the greatest, must be determined by himself, as immediately from the Lord; which was, doubtless, taking too much upon him, and going beyond his Abilities.

The next Remove and Incampment of the *Israelites* was *Sinai*, where *Moses* gave the Law, and took a solemn Oath from all the People, which obliged both them, and their Posterity, to perpetual Obedience. This Law was never to be altered by any future Change of Persons, or Circumstances. They were to worship the God of *Israel* alone, or *Moses* and *Aaron's* God, and not the God of any other Land or Country whatever.

Moses having given the Moral and Civil Laws, and taken a solemn Oath from the People, for perpetual Obedience, goes up again into the Mount, and takes with him *Aaron*, and his Sons *Nadab* and *Abihu*, with 70 of the Elders of *Israel*, where they were to see this national tutelar God, to whom they had been thus solemnly sworn. Then went up *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and seventy of the Elders of *Israel*. And they saw the God of *Israel*, and under his Feet was,

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as it were, the Work of a Sapphire Stone, and as the very Heaven when it is clear. And upon the Nobles of the Children of Israel he laid not his Hand [or did not hurt or punish them] also they saw God, and did eat and drink. And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the Mountain, and be there, and I will give thee Tables of Stone, and the Law and the Commandments which I have written to teach them, Exod. xxiv. 9—12. This, surely, was the greatest Favour, to see him who is absolutely infinite and invisible, and to hear his Voice, as sensible, local, and circumscriptive, who from the necessary Nature and Reason of Things, neither has, or can possibly have, any such sensible Properties. But this, as well as the whole Story all along, makes it evident, that this God of *Israel*, or the God that *Moses* and *Aaron* had made and provided for the People, was a local, tutelar, visible, and audible God, and the God and Protector of that Nation only, without any such Relation to any other Nation or Country. This then could not be the God of Heaven and Earth, the infinite, omnipresent Creator, who, without Respect of Persons, has an equal Regard to all his Creatures, and who is the God and Rewarder of all such as diligently seek him, in one Nation or Country, as well as another. And 'tis certain, from all History, that the Knowledge and Worship of the true God never was confined to *Israel*; whereas all

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all the Superstition in the World came originally from them, so far as any Records now extant can go. And I would here call upon all the Learned in this Age, to show me what Nation in the World ever received the true Religion, or the Worship of the true God, from this Nation.

But during the 40 Days that *Moses* staid on the Mount, *Aaron* and the People had made a Calf, and ascribed their whole Deliverance to the Gods of *Egypt*. And this, after they had seen all the Wonders of the Lord in *Egypt*, and at the Red Sea, depended absolutely for now three Months on the God of *Moses*, for a miraculous Supply of Bread, Flesh, and Water, when they had no natural Way or Means of Subsistence; and after the Chiefs and Heads of them had seen this true God, in all his Glory, and heard his Promise and Declaration to *Moses*, that he would write all his Laws with his own Hand on Tables of Stone, and send them down to the People, to be kept as a perpetual, sacred Depositum among them. Yet after all this, they relapsed suddenly, and within 40 Days of *Moses's* Stay on the Mount; they relapsed, I say, into the old *Egyptian* Idolatry, and were not yet convinced, that the Gods of *Egypt* were not true Gods; or that *Moses* and *Aaron* had wrought any greater, or more real Miracles, than the *Egyptian* Priests and Magicians. And *Aaron* himself, at this Time, seems to

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have come very readily, and without Opposition, into the Sentiments of the Populace, and to have despaired ever to have brought this People into *Canaan*, there to establish a Kingdom of their own; for he made their God, and joined with them in the Cry of extolling the Gods of *Egypt*, as their true and real Deliverers. But, is it possible, with any Appearance of Probability, to join this Story with what the same Author had related before, concerning all the Demonstrations of Power in the God of *Israel*, superior to the Gods of *Egypt*? Is it conceivable, that this People should be more stupid and brutish than their Sheep and Cattle; or would not an Ox, or an Ass have more Sense and Gratitude towards their Owner, Feeder, and Preserver? This might be said, perhaps, in some spiritual Matters, and where the Interests of the Soul, and another World, which are out of Sight, should be set against those of the Body, and the present sensible Life. But here was no such Matter: They were not at all impress'd with any Hopes, or Fears, of Good or Evil after Death: They could only judge of their present, temporal Interest; and upon this Score they thought they had no Reason to thank *Moses*, or to believe any Thing of his divine Mission and Authority: They saw and felt, that *Moses* had much wors'ted their Condition in thus enraging the *Egyptians*, and forcing them to flee for their Lives out of a rich

rich and plentiful Country, into so barren and terrible a Wilderness, where they could have now no Prospect of ever gaining a better Settlement. They had found, by Experience, from their ill Success with the *Amalekites*, that *Moses* had promised more than he could perform, that his pretended Oath of God to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jaakob*, was not made good, though the Time was elapsed; and, consequently, that the Lord was not so intimate with, and favourable to *Moses*, as he pretended. No Body can read this Story without drawing such Consequences from it, as the most natural Sense and Construction of such Events.

The frequent Murmurings of the People in the Wilderness, the great and grievous Hardships they suffered there for 40 Years together, the bloody Wars they were engaged in afterwards, from which they were scarce ever free, the cruel, unnatural Work they were at last set upon, to gain any Settlement at all, and their eager Desire, and strong Inclination so often discovered, and breaking out in the Wilderness, to go back again to *Egypt*, and to submit themselves, and make the best Terms they could with the *Egyptians*; all this, and the whole Sequel and Construction of the Story shew, that *Moses* and *Aaron* had never receiv'd so full and ample a Commission and Authority from God, as they pretended to; and that their own Ambition of forming

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and establishing a Kingdom of their own, in which the supreme Power was to be for ever settled and secured, in their own House and Family; that this, I say, had weigh'd more with them in setting about such an Enterprize, than the Good of the People. I think any one must be convinced of this, who reads the whole Story, from first to last, with any Impartiality, and so as to form his Judgment of it by the same Rules of Criticism and Interpretation, that he would think fit and reasonable in examining and judging of any other History, or Account of Things. But this cannot, I know, be admitted, where there is a strong Prejudice and Prepossession of Inspiration, Revelation, and immediate, positive, divine Authority. And yet this Pretence would be full as good in Favour of *Zoroaster*, *Mahomet*, or any other Pretender to *Revelation above Reason*. For this being once supposed, no Scheme of Superstition, or false Religion, can be ever brought to the Test of Reason, or be judged of by it; but one System of Positives may be prov'd by Miracles, Prophecies, and Revelations, as well as another.

But not to follow the *Hebrew* Historian any farther; the Sum of what has been hitherto observed is this: That these *Hebrew*, or Eastern Shepherds, came first into *Egypt*, and gained a Settlement in the best and richest Part of the Country, not only without

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Opposition, but even by Invitation and Consent. That soon after they had been received and settled there, they so far ingratiated themselves with the King and Court, as to obtain the principal Power, Government, and Direction of the Kingdom, and reduce the *Egyptians* themselves to a State of Dependence on them. That the *Egyptians*, in Process of Time, grew jealous of them, found them to be too numerous and mighty for them, and therefore contriv'd how to bring them down, keep them under, and regain their antient Power and Liberty: That hereupon, in this Struggle and Opposition, the Shepherds at first prevailed, and not content with their first Settlement, spread themselves all over the Country, and threatened an intire Conquest; for, says the *Hebrew* Historian, speaking of the Time about the Birth of *Moses*, *the whole Land was full of them*. But after a long Contest and Struggle on both Sides, the *Egyptians* at last prevailed; they drove the Shepherds into that Part of the Country which they were first possessed of, they kept as many of them, as they could, to hard Labour, and used all possible Means to root them out, and destroy them: They were driven, at last, to the utmost Extremity, and when *Moses* undertook and attempted their Deliverance, instead of mending the Matter, it still grew worse and worse with them; and Matters were brought at length to

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such an Exigence, that their utter Destruction, in one Day, had been resolved upon; and had they not found Means to escape by Flight, and hurry off all together in the Dead of the Night, they must have been all put to the Sword. But by this sudden precipitate Flight, they gained a Day or two's March of the *Egyptians*, who pursued them with a great Army. But this Army being by some extraordinary Providence scattered and broken, the Shepherds escaped safe into the Deserts of *Arabia*, where after long Hardships and Sufferings, they gained at last a Settlement in *Canaan*, by conquering and driving out the old Inhabitants, and taking Possession of their Lands and Labours. This is the *Hebrew* Historian's own Account of the Matter, when it comes to be freed from the dramatic, fictitious Circumstances, and poetic Images, with which he clogs, darkens, and confuses, so as to render his Story incredible and inconsistent. And this plain, natural Account is perfectly agreeable to all that *Manetho*, and other profane Authors have left us concerning the Shepherds in *Egypt*, the easy Settlement they gained there, the Conquests and Devastations they afterwards made, and, at last, their Expulsion out of the Country.

Some very learned Men have taken great Pains to shew, that the Shepherds mentioned by *Manetho*, and others from him, could not be the *Israelites*, or *Hebrew Shepherds*; tho' they

they have not been able to discover any other Nation in the World, that ever distinguished themselves by this Name, or assumed such a national Character, as these *Hebrew* Shepherds certainly did. And bating the Dramatism and fictitious Representations of the *Hebrew* Author, every natural and credible Part of the Story will agree exactly with what we find in profane Authors relating to the Shepherds, who were first expelled out of *Egypt* after they had made themselves almost intire Masters of the whole Country. *Josephus* could not deny, and is forced to own, that these most antient Shepherds, who were driven out of *Egypt* after they had obtained a peaceable Settlement, and great Power there, were the *Israelites*, his own Nation. *Josephus*, indeed, denies what *Manetho*, and the Heathen Writers charge upon these Shepherds, that they were greatly subject to the Leprosy, Itch, Scabs, Lice, and all Sorts of the most inveterate and contagious Foulnesses of the Skin; and that their having over-run the Country, and infected the *Egyptians* with these Maladies, was one great Reason which induced the People of *Egypt*, in general, at last to take up Arms against them, and drive them out of the Land. But the Reasons which *Josephus* offers against this Calumny, as he thought it, instead of weakening, rather strengthen and confirm the Thing, as true in Fact. The great Care and Precaution
which

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which *Moses* took in the Constitution of his Law against all such cutaneous Foulnesses, and to prevent the spreading them from such as were already infected, shews, indeed, that they must be more free from these Distempers, and less liable to Infection, after these rigid Precepts came to be put in Execution, than they had been before. But this cannot prove, that they did not come out of *Egypt* in this leprous, scabby Condition, or that they had not infected the *Egyptians* with it, before they came out. It rather proves the contrary, that they had been extremely liable to these Diseases, while they were under no Law, and no sufficient Care had been taken to prevent those natural Effects of gross Feeding, foul Living, Uncleanliness, and Nastiness. If this be not supposed, no Reason can be given for those severe Precepts which obliged them to such frequent Washings and Cleansings, both of their Bodies and Cloaths, and absolutely prohibiting such unclean, infected Persons from coming into Company, or joining with the Congregation, till they had been thoroughly healed and cleansed. The Consequence of which was, that many were confined for their whole Lives, and never suffered to appear Abroad more, where the Foulness prov'd to be incurable. Nay, in Cases of this Kind, which were known to be contagious, the Person infected was obliged to give Notice of it, by crying out, I am unclean,

clean, unclean; and he was not to approach any Body, or suffer any one to come near him. These rigorous Precepts, to prevent cutaneous Foulnesses, or hinder their Spreading and Propagation from one Body to another made a great Part of the Law and Religion of *Moses*; and all the Precepts about Meats, clean and unclean, the severe Prohibitions against so much as touching any Thing that might foul and infect them, and the strict Injunctions for frequent Washing and Cleansing, which, on one Account or other, they must be obliged to several Times a Day; I say all this terminates in the general Law, and Necessity of keeping themselves clean; which shews, that they were naturally a very fordid, nasty People, and that they had been very great Sufferers by it. And, indeed, after all these legal Guards and Injunctions against it, and by way of Prevention, they were still extreamly liable to these cutaneous, infectious Distempers, especially the Leprosy, as their History shews all down. And this may serve to vindicate *Manetho*, and other Heathen Authors, who have made this Sort of Diseases a distinguishing Characteristic of these antient Shepherds in *Egypt*.

One of the most learned Men among the Moderns, and who has taken great Pains to shew, that the antient Shepherds, who were expell'd out of *Egypt*, could not be the *Israelites*, or the *Hebrew* Shepherds, is the Rev.
Mr.

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Mr. *Shuckford*, in the second Volume of his *Chronology, or the Sacred and profane History of the World connected*. I must own, that the World has been very much obliged, and is likely to be more so, by the Labours of this learned Man; but I can by no Means see the Force of his Argument, with Regard to the Shepherds in *Egypt*, while he endeavours to shift it off from the *Israelites*, or *Hebrew* Shepherds; and shall, therefore, take the Liberty of briefly examining what he has said about it.

The Author is forced, by the Concurrence of all History and Chronology, to make the Time of the Shepherds being in *Egypt* coincident with that of the *Israelites* being there; and allows, that the Conquests and Devastations of those Shepherds in *Egypt* happened between the Times of the Death of *Joseph*, and Birth of *Moses*. He is inclined to place the Beginning of these Wars and Devastations of the Shepherds, about 13 Years before the Birth of *Moses*; though for any Thing that can be concluded from his Reasonings, it might have been 20 or 30 Years earlier: But be this as it will, I shall not dispute it with him, but consider the Account he gives of these Shepherds, and their first coming into *Egypt*, and settling there by Conquest and Force of Arms. His Account of the Matter runs thus. “ In the fifth Year of *Concharis*, “ whom *Josephus* from *Manetho* calls *Timæus*, “ and

“ and who, according to *Syncellus*, was the
 “ 25th King of the Land of *Tanis*, or Lower
 “ *Egypt*, there came a numerous Army of
 “ unknown People, and invaded *Egypt* on a
 “ sudden; they over-ran both the Upper and
 “ Lower *Egypt*, fired Houses and Cities, killed
 “ the Inhabitants, and made a terrible De-
 “ vastation all the Land over; and having,
 “ in a little Time, subdued all before them,
 “ they made one of their own Leaders their
 “ King, whose Name was *Salatis*. *Salatis*
 “ being made King, laid the Land under
 “ Tribute, made the antient Inhabitants of
 “ *Egypt* his Slaves, garison'd such Towns as
 “ he thought proper all over the Country,
 “ established himself upon the Throne, and
 “ settled his People in the Land. Whence
 “ *Salatis*, and his Followers came, is only to
 “ be conjectur'd: They call'd themselves the
 “ *Pastors*, or *Shepherds*; they took particular
 “ Care to fortify the eastern Parts of *Egypt*,
 “ and seem'd most afraid of a Disturbance
 “ from that Quarter. The Government of
 “ *Egypt* being thus subverted, the Protection
 “ and Happiness which the *Israelites* enjoy'd,
 “ perish'd with it. *Salatis* knew nothing of
 “ *Joseph*, nor did he regard any Establish-
 “ ment which *Joseph* had settled: He made
 “ his Way into *Egypt* with his Sword, and he
 “ brought his People into the Land by Con-
 “ quest, in such a Manner, and upon such
 “ Terms, as he thought fit; and the *Israelites*
 “ were

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“ were a rich and increasing People, inhabiting the very Parts which he thought proper to take the greatest Care of, and he readily suspected, that if any Invasion should happen from the East, they would join against them; he therefore took a particular Care to keep them low.” *Connect. &c. p. 233, 234.* I think we have here a very remarkable Instance how far Prejudice may corrupt and bribe a Man’s Judgment; for I take this whole Account of the Matter to be an intire Misrepresentation of all History, both sacred and profane. The learned Author was resolved, that the *Hebrew* Shepherds should not be the People who over-ran and conquered *Egypt*, though he knew not what to do with another Set of Shepherds there at the same Time, nor from whence to fetch them. The sacred Historian assures us, that it was the *Israelites*, or *Hebrew* Shepherds, that had over-run the whole Land, and that they were grown more and mightier than the *Egyptians*. But this learned Author was in such Distress on this Occasion, that he is forced to suppose and assert, that it was not the *Hebrew*, or Eastern Shepherds, but some other Nation of Shepherds that came into *Egypt* by Force of Arms, and suddenly over-running the Land, conquered and enslaved the *Egyptians* and *Israelites* too. And by this strange Conquest, the Happiness and Liberties of the native *Egyptians* and *Israelites*,

or *Hebrew* Shepherds too, perish'd both together under the Yoke of an imaginary Nation of Shepherds, that had been never known or heard of before. What the Author here supposes and asserts, that the Shepherds came first into *Egypt* by Force of Arms, and settled themselves there by a previous Conquest, is as contrary to *Manetho*, and to all profane Story, as it is to the sacred Text; *Manetho* informs us, that God being angry with the Nation, there came into *Egypt* a great Number of Strangers, an unknown People from the East, who called themselves *Shepherds*, that came in at first peaceably, and settled in the Country without any Opposition, or *without striking a Blow*. That in some Length of Time, not content with their original Settlement, they made War upon the *Egyptians*, over-ran the whole Country, committed great Outrages and Devastations, and made the Kings and People of *Egypt* tributary to them. That after a long War and Struggle between the two Nations, the *Egyptians*, at length, got the better of the Shepherd People, drove them out of one Fortrefs and Strong-Hold after another, and, at last, had shut them up in one large, strong Town, called *Abaris*, where they had a very numerous Garison, or armed Force of 240,000 Men. Here they had been closely block'd up, and reduc'd to great Extremity, and yet saved themselves, at last, by a sudden Flight, and escap'd
the

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the Fury of the *Egyptians*, who pursued them with an Intent to have cut them all off. This is the Substance, without Disguise, of what we have from *Manetho*, and other Heathen Writers, concerning these Shepherds. And how well this agrees with our *Hebrew* sacred Account of the Matter, as to the natural Part of the History, we have seen already. But it must be own'd, that the supernatural Part of the Story, as related by the *Hebrew* Author, has no collateral Evidence, and nothing of it can be found in any profane Records of Antiquity. And how far this may strengthen or weaken the miraculous Part of the *Hebrew* Story, I must leave to farther Consideration. But this we know, that the antient Heathen Writers were exceedingly fond of recording Miracles and Prodigies of any Kind, where they had the least Foundation for it, though only by Report; but the *Hebrew* Books having been always kept as a sacred Depositum among themselves, could never be consider'd or examin'd by the most antient profane Authors; and this I presume is the Reason, that we hear so little of their Miracles and Prodigies from other Hands.

The learned Author thinks it a strong Argument in his Favour, that the King of *Egypt*, who broke with the *Israelites*, and endeavour'd to suppress them, could not be one of the *Pharaoh's*, or native Kings of *Egypt*,
but

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but a Foreigner, because *he was a new King, who knew not Joseph*. I believe such a Reason was never thought of before, that a *new King* must be a *foreign King*, and that this King too must have been a *Foreigner*, because he *knew not Joseph*. A new King, in common Speech, signifies no more than another King, or a new Successor. From the Time that *Joseph* was made Prime Minister, to his Death, was 80 Years, during which there must have been several successive Reigns in *Egypt*, probably three or four at least. How long *Joseph*, before his Death, might have retired from publick Business, and not be known at Court, is not said; but it might have been for many Years. We find, that he died obscurely, and had only a private Interment, without any publick Notice taken of it. And in our Author's own Account, there had been 52 Years from the Death of *Joseph*, before this new King arose, who did not know him; and, therefore, he need not have been a Foreigner, after a Succession of five or six ordinary Reigns had pass'd since the Beginning of *Joseph's* Ministry, and full Power in *Egypt*. Besides, had it been to this learned Author's Purpose, he might have observ'd, that the Phrase, *not to know*, often signifies, *not to own or approve*; of which he might have produc'd a great Number of Instances. And then, it is certain, that this new King, who was now just come to the Throne, did not approve of

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the Measures which *Joseph* had taken for enslaving the Nation, and subjecting the *Egyptians* to his Brethren the Shepherds. But after all, it is evident, from the *Hebrew* Author himself, that the *Israelite* Shepherds were all along opposed, and at last driven out, or forced to a sudden Flight by the *Pharaoh's*, or native Kings of *Egypt*. For when an *Ethiopian*, or any Foreigner reign'd in *Egypt*, the *Hebrew* Historians never give him the Title of *Pharaoh*, but distinguish him by some other Name.

The Author is hard put to it, to give us so much as his Guesses, or Conjectures, who this imaginary Nation of Shepherds should be, or from whence they should come, who had conquered *Egypt*, and both the *Egyptians* and *Israelites* too; and this at a Time, when *Egypt* was in its full Strength and Glory, in strict Friendship and Alliance with another powerful Nation then among them, and in full Possession of all the Fortresses and Strong-Holds which *Joseph* had built for Magazines and Store-Houses. But it happens very unlucky for the Author, that in his own Account the War-Struggle, or Opposition between the *Egyptians* and the *Israelites* was coincident with the very Time when he supposes this new imaginary Nation of strolling, fugitive Shepherds to have come in, Sword in Hand, and conquered and enslaved them both. But how contrary soever it may be

to all History, both sacred and profane, the learned Author will venture to guess, that this new upstart Nation of Shepherds *were the Horites*, whom the Children of *Esfau* had drove out of their own Country, *i. e. Idumea*. But is it credible, that a Company of poor Fugitives, who had been driven out of their own Country by a Force vastly inferior to that of *Egypt*, should now, all at once, fall in upon *Egypt* Sword in Hand, and conquer the *Egyptians* and *Israelites*? Or could these *Horites* have been called Eastern and unknown People, with Respect to *Egypt*, when they were their next Door Neighbours, and situated in the North? Or does our learned Author any where find, that the *Horites* had ever pass'd under the national Name and Character of Shepherds, as the *Israelites* certainly did? But it would be only losing Time, and abusing the Reader's Patience, to say any Thing more in Confutation of so strange and extravagant a Supposition as this.

It appears then, after all the Labours of this Author, and other learned Men, to prove the contrary, that the Shepherds, so famous in profane History, for their Conquests and Devastations in *Egypt*, could be no other than the *Hebrew* Shepherds, or *Israelites*. No other whole Community, or Body of People in all Story, ever pass'd under this national Character, or assumed to themselves any such general Denomination. All antient Chrono-

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logy, when rightly adjusted, must make the Times coincident, and the natural History of the Facts on both Sides, abstracting from the supernatural Dramatism, will be perfectly consistent and agreeable. But the contrary, it seems, is maintained in Defence of *Revelation*; and it must be own'd, that all Revelation above Reason, or supernatural Accounts of Things, came originally from the *Hebrew* Patriarchs, who, of all Men living, seem to have been most ignorant of natural Causes; since they resolved every Thing that happened to them into Miracle and immediate Interposition; or at least their Successors, who have left us the Memoirs of their Lives, have done this for them. But so it is, that we have no History of those earlier Ages, till the grossest Superstition, and the deepest Cheats of Magic and Priestcraft had been establish'd in *Egypt*; or we have no Remains of History earlier than the Days of *Moses*, who was an *Egyptian* by Birth and Education, and which ought to be consider'd by any one who would read his History with Understanding.

The gradual Progress of Superstition and false Religion in the World, under the Presence of Revelation and supernatural Appearances, deserves a serious Enquiry. I shall bestow some Pages upon this, though I am sensible, that I shall hereby irritate and provoke many learned Men, who would be now thought the most zealous Sticklers for *Revelation*,

lation, as a Fountain and Source of Knowledge above *Reason*. This has been always the Pretence of artful, designing Priests and Politicians of all Ages, and in every Country, so far as History can carry us. And a better Method of befooling and enslaving Mankind could never have been thought of, than this Claim of a Principle, and Source of Knowledge, and Rule of Judgment, above and beyond all human Reason.

It is wonderful to observe how far this Notion of Revelation has prevail'd, and how much the Passions of Men are irritated and disturbed, even in this inlightened Age, when they find it doubted of, or disputed. To deny, or doubt of a Revelation above Reason, is much the same Thing as denying God, and Providence, and throwing off the whole Religion of Nature. Such a Notion of Revelation has been fixed and radicated by Education, and strongly impress'd by all the Ignorance and Artifice of Priests, and Professors of School-Divinity. The *Crafty* work upon the *Simple*, and the *Interest* of one is the *Conscience* of the other. Thus Craft founded on Interest, and Ignorance supported by Craft, has been ever the Foundation and unsurmountable Strength of a *supernatural Religion*.

It seems plain, that the *Hebrew* Nation, from the very Beginning, or from *Abraham's* Time, paid a mediatorial or subordinate, ministerial

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nisterial Worship to *Angels*. They consider'd them as the Prime-Ministers of Providence, to whom God had committed the Government of the World. These Guardian Angels, or Genii, had the Charge of Kingdoms, Provinces, Cities, Towns, and even of particular Persons. They had a Commission from God to bless or curse, to save or destroy, to reward or punish, as they thought fit, such Nations, or particular Persons, as God had put under their Care, Inspection, and Jurisdiction; and thus authoriz'd by Jehovah, or the supream Being, they became his immediate, commissioned Ministers, Agents, and Representatives; and no Good or Evil could be dispensed to Men, but under their delegated Authority, Cognizance, and Direction. And from hence it was natural and necessary to pay them all that Homage, Obedience, or Worship, which their high Stations, and the Authority committed to them by the supream Governor required. And, therefore, they might be invoked directly for any Blessing or Good which they had Authority to dispense, as a Minister of State may be apply'd to, and petitioned immediately and directly for any Place, Honour, or Privilege, which the King has given him the Grant and Disposal of.

I think it is very plain, that this Notion of God's governing Providence, and the Dispensation of Good or Evil to Mankind, by the
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the Ministration of Angels, made a very considerable Part of the Religion and Theology of the most antient *Hebrew* Patriarchs; at least, if *Moses*, their after Historian, did not misrepresent them. And of this, to pass over others, we have a very clear and undeniable Instance in *Jaakob* on his Death-Bed: While he is blessing his Sons, and taking his Leave of them, he invokes both God and the Angel distinctly and separately; yet both the one and the other directly and immediately. For tho' his Guardian-Angel did not then appear to him, yet he thought him always present, and a Witness to all his Actions. Now *Jaakob* just dying, and taking Leave of *Joseph*, and his Children, said, The God before whom my Fathers *Abraham* and *Isaac* did walk, the God who has fed me all my Life long, unto this Day, bless thee. The Angel that hath deliver'd me from all Evil bless the Children, &c. Here it is very plain, that the Angel had been *Jaakob's* Guardian-Protector and Deliverer through the whole Course of his Life, as well as the God, whose Agent and Minister he was.

This Religion of Guardian-Angels, or local, tutelar Gods, acting by Commission from the supream Being, is at least as old as *Abraham*, so far as we can depend on the Credit of their after Historians of that Nation: And beyond this one cannot carry the Argument from human Authority. The Lord,

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or *Jehovah*, first appeared and spoke to *Abram* in *Mesopotamia*, at, or before the Death of his Father *Terah*. He had now promised to make of him a great and mighty Nation, and to give them a rich and plentiful Country: But what Country that should be, *Abram* was not yet appriz'd. *Canaan* was now a desolate, barren Country, and not likely to be the promised Land, as I have shewn already. But I only mention this from *Gen. xii.* as the first Instance of the supream God, or *Jehovah*, appearing and conversing with Men: But this is plain, from the same Chapter, that as soon as *Abraham* came so far westward as *Palestine*, and found a barren, desert Country, he could not think this the Place design'd him, where he found a great Scarcity and Famine on his first Arrival. And, therefore, he went down, with his whole Substance and Patriarchy, into *Egypt*, with a Design to settle there, as presuming that must be the promised Land. But concerning his Mistake and Disappointment here, I have spoken before.

But before *Abram's* Name was changed to *Abraham*, the Appearances of *Jehovah* to him, and conversing with him, seem to have been only in a Dream. And hitherto *Abram's* Dreams are recorded. For just before the great Promise was made to *Abraham*, the Word of *Jehovah* came to *Abram* in a Vision, or Dream, by which he was encouraged

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not to fear, since he should certainly have a Son and Heir by *Sarai* his Wife, notwithstanding her great Age. But *Sarai's* Pregnancy, the Birth of *Isaac*, and the Inheritance of *Canaan*, had been yet only dream'd of. And even the great Promise of the peaceable Inheritance of *Canaan*, after 400 Years, reckoning from this Time, was given in a deep Sleep and Dream. *And when the Sun went down, there fell a heavy Sleep upon Abram, and lo a very fearful Darknes fell upon him. Then he, Jehovah, said to Abram, Know for a Surety, that thy Seed shall be a Stranger in a Land that is not theirs, 400 Years, and shall serve them, and they shall intreat them evil. Notwithstanding the Nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and afterward they shall come out with great Substance.*—At the same Time while *Abram* was under this heavy Sleep, and fearful Darknes, *Jehovah* made a Covenant with *Abram*, saying, *Unto thy Seed have I given this Land, from the River of Egypt to the great River Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenezites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, the Amorites also, and the Canaanites, and the Gergashites, and the Jebusites.* I would refer the Reader for all this to *Gen. xv.* especially from *Ver. 12.* to the End of the Chapter. But all this was represented to *Abram* in a Vision, or Dream, under a deep Gloom, and fearful Darknes. And 'tis well

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well it may be excused as a Dream, since nothing of it ever came to pass relating to all, or any of the Countries, they were to possess at the End of 400 Years. They never had much more than one half of *Palestine* and *Phœnicia*, and nothing beyond that in *Syria*, and towards the *Euphrates*. Hitherto *Abraham* had only dreamed, and nothing but his Dreams are recorded, as the Event proved it to be all a Dream. But in the next, *Chap. xvi.* we have something of true History, or Matter of Fact, besides mere Dreams. *Sarai* finding herself barren, and having no more Hopes of a Child, gave her Maid *Hagar* to him, that he might have a Son, to be his Heir, from her. When *Hagar* found she had conceiv'd, and supposed her Son, if it proved one, must be Heir, she despised her Mistress, and behaved so insolently to her, that *Sarai* made heavy Complaints to her Husband of it, who gave her Leave to turn the Maid out of Doors. But the Angel of the Lord appeared to *Hagar*, whether in a Dream, or in Reality, is not said, and advised her to return and humble herself to her Mistress; which she did, and was received into the Family again. And after this she was delivered of *Ishmael*, when *Abram* was 86 Years old, and *Sarai* 76. In *Chap. xvii.* Jehovah appeared again to *Abram*, renews the same Covenant and Promise to him, promises him a Son by *Sarai*, and changes the Name of *Abram* to *Abraham*,
and

and of *Sarai* to *Sarah*. And here we have an Account of a long Conference, and many Things that pass'd between God and the Patriarch, for which I must refer the Reader to the Chapter itself. *Abraham* was now 99, and *Sarah* 89 Years old, when their Names were changed. In *Chap. xviii.* we have an Account of *Jehovah's* appearing and talking to *Abraham* again; and as the Signal of his Presence, *Abraham* saw three Men coming towards him, as he was sitting at his Tent-Door in the Heat of the Day. He ran to meet them, and then addresses himself to *Jehovah*, and to them. *And he said, Lord, if I have now found Favour in thy Sight, go not, I pray thee, from thy Servant. Let a little Water, I pray you, be brought, and wash your Feet, and rest your selves under the Tree. And I will bring a Morſel of Bread, that you may comfort your Hearts, afterward ye shall go your Way, for therefore are you come to your Servant; and they said, Do even as thou hast said.* Upon this *Abraham*, with all possible Speed, got ready an Entertainment for them, and provided an elegant Dinner, with Cakes of Flower, a tender good Calf, and Butter and Milk, which he set before them. While they were at Dinner, they asked him for *Sarah*. *Where is Sarah thy Wife?* And he answered, *Behold she is in the Tent.* And he [*Jehovah*] said, *I will certainly come again unto thee, according to the Time of Life; and*
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lo, Sarah thy Wife shall have a Son; and Sarah heard in the Tent Door, which was behind him [Jehovah.] I quote this for the Peculiarity of the Phraseology, and to shew how different it is from our Way of speaking and thinking now. The Names and Characters of the three Men, and of Jehovah, are here so confounded and interchanged, as if they were the same Persons, and what said by the one, was spoken by the other. After these three Men had dined, they rose up, and went on in their Journey towards *Sodom*, and *Abraham* brought them going Part of the Way. *And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham the Thing that I do, seeing that Abraham shall be indeed a great and mighty Nation, and all the Nations of the Earth shall be blessed in him? And the Men turned thence, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah.* And here we have a particular Account of *Abraham's* Discourse and Expostulation with *Jehovah*, when the Men were gone off. *Abraham* interceeds and intreats for *Sodom*, that God would not slay the Righteous with the Wicked, supposing any considerable Number of righteous Persons should be found in it. In this Intercession, *Abraham* brought down *Jehovah*, from 50 to 10, and got a Promise, that the City should not be destroy'd, if only 10 righteous Persons could be found in it; But no Righteous could be found there, but
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Lot, his Wife, and two Daughters, who were saved by the Angels from the common Destruction.

It would be needless to pursue this *Hebrew* Phraseology, or Manner of speaking and writing any farther. The same Manner and Figure of Speech runs throughout their Writings, from first to last. But what at first had a very good moral Sense and Construction, and argued a pious and religious Trust in, and Dependence on God and Providence, came afterward to be turned into Superstition, Enthusiasm, and the most unnatural and incredible Accounts of God and Providence. This great Degeneracy, Inversion of Nature, and gross Corruption of Religion, happened afterward in *Egypt*, when *Joseph* had established an hereditary Priesthood there, endow'd with vast Revenues in Lands, and made independent on the Crown. This gross Superstition, Corruption of Religion, and most unnatural, false Representation of God and Providence, had been carry'd to the Height, and strongly impress'd upon all Ranks and Degrees of Men in *Egypt*, before the Days of *Moses*. And *Moses* himself had been brought up in all the occult Philosophy, and Magic Arts of the *Egyptian* Priests and Sorcerers, and which he and *Aaron*, in Confederacy afterward, found an Opportunity of applying to their own Purposes, and ambitious Views. But it cannot be supposed,

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posed, that this great Degeneracy, Corruption, and Inversion of all Nature and Religion happened so early, as the Days of *Abraham*. Those most antient holy Men, who lengthened out their Days beyond the common Course of Nature, by a strict Virtue, Temperance, and an active, laborious Life, had no such ambitious Views as the Princes and Priests of *Egypt* had in after Ages. They contented themselves with what Providence allotted them, and with the lawful Fruits of their own Labour and Industry, and laid no Schemes for enriching and aggrandizing themselves, by invading other Mens Property, and by the Conquest, Devastation, and Plunder of other Countries and Nations. *Abraham*, in his Time, might easily have conquered the whole Land of *Canaan*, and driven out all the former Inhabitants then settled in the Country, had he thought fit; for he had a Force superior to any, or all of them. But he sought only a peaceable Settlement, where Providence should cast him. And this was the Character and Conduct of *Isaac* and *Jaakob* afterward, and of the *Hebrews* in *Canaan*, for about 200 Years.

In these first and purest Ages, before Luxury, Avarice, and Ambition had taken Place, Men lived with an intire, absolute Trust in, and Reliance upon God, and carefully observed and recorded all the remarkable Incidents and Occurrences of divine Providence towards

towards them, which they took and understood as so many Declarations, Monitions, and Instructions from God to them. Thus they considered every great Occurrence, or remarkable Turn of Providence; and thus they spoke of it by an Idiom and Phraseology peculiar to their Language. Every Thing by which Providence furnished them with the Means of farther Information in Matters of great Importance, or afforded them an Opportunity of obtaining a great Good, was the Voice and Direction of God to them. Thus God spoke to them by Dreams, by the Death of Relations, by the accidental Entertainment and Lodgment of Strangers and Travellers, that brought them any Intelligence of great Moment, and who were therefore considered and spoken of as the Angels of the Lord, or Messengers from God to them. In short, every extraordinary Turn of Providence, or Change of State and Circumstances, by which they were farther directed in their Life and Conduct, was the Voice of God to them. And thus when they were suddenly and strongly impressed with any Thing of great Consequence, and which served to fix and form their Resolution for their future Conduct; this was the Voice and Monition of God to them, and so they consider and speak of it in the *Hebrew* Dialect. And this may serve to explain the Language and Phraseology of the *Hebrew* Historian, and to reconcile
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his Account of Things to Nature and Reason, as it shews the great Piety of those antient, holy Patriarchs, their intire Dependance upon God, as their Father, Preserver, Informer, and Director, and their strict Regard to all the Dispensations of his Providence towards them in the whole Course of their Lives.

But though this Way of interpreting the Mind and Will of God to them, by the Dispensations of his Providence towards them in the most remarkable Occurrences of their Lives, argued their firm Trust in, and absolute Dependance on him, a careful Scrutiny of their Lives and Actions, and a strict Regard to God's providential Disposal of them; yet when they carried it too far, and made too hasty Conclusions of this Kind, it ran into Enthusiasm, and sometimes led them into Error. Of this we have a very remarkable Instance in *Abraham* himself; he was strongly persuaded, in his own Mind, that God would bless and prosper him in *Isaac*, and make of him a great Nation; he firmly believed, that as God was able, so he would certainly raise his only Son and Heir again from the Dead, though he should sacrifice him, and burn him to Ashes; and he had strongly wrought himself up into such a Persuasion, that he concluded God, in Reality, required it of him, and expected it from him. Accordingly he resolved upon it, as an
Act

Act of Obedience to God, and was just upon the Point of putting it in Execution, had he not been providentially prevented. That *Abraham* did not commit this Fact as to the outward overt Act, is a Matter of no Consequence, with Regard to the Morality of the Action. If the Thing was good and praiseworthy, *Abraham* had as much the Merit and Glory of it, as if he had done it in Fact, and as much the Blame if it was otherwise. But it is evident in Fact, that *Abraham* had mistaken the Mind and Will of God in this Case, because God prevented him in the Execution. Nothing can be more absurd, than to imagine, that God would command *Abraham* a Thing not fit to be done, only to try what he would do, as if he did not know before, without any such Trial. We must therefore here suppose, either first, that there are some Circumstances omitted in this Story that might have set it in a clearer Light; or else, that *Abraham* was under a Delusion in this Case, and had wrought himself into a wrong Persuasion, and mistook the Voice and Will of God to him; or lastly, that human Sacrifices are agreeable to the Nature and Perfections of God, and may be commanded. And this, indeed, how contrary soever to Nature and Reason, is what *Abraham* seems to have believ'd, and been persuaded of. And the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* supposes the same Thing, that *Abraham's* Faith and

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Resolution upon it, were good and meritorious in this Case, and, consequently, that human Sacrifices are agreeable to, or consistent with the Nature and Perfections of God, and may accordingly be commanded, and made a positive Duty by Revelation. But must not such a Supposition destroy and set aside the whole Law of Nature, and leave us no prior Principle or Rule of Judgment in Reason concerning the Will and Law of God to us? But I would ask how such a Revelation could be prov'd, as coming from God; or whether God, by Revelation, may countermand and set aside all the Laws and Principles of Reason?

When Jehovah, therefore, or the supream God, is said to come down from Heaven to Earth, to walk about from Place to Place, and to converse in a visible, audible Manner with Men, we must understand it, as above explain'd, of God's speaking to them by such as he providentially sent to them, whom they receiv'd and entertain'd in their Houses, and who were considered as Angels, or Messengers from God. Thus also God declared his Will to them, by the remarkable Occurrences of his Providence towards them, and very often by their Dreams. But in this Way and Method of knowing and judging of the Voice and Will of God to them, they were liable to Error, and sometimes actually mistaken.

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inconsistent with Theocracy. 99

The Notion of guardian, tutelar Angels, or cœlestial, immortal Beings, presiding over, and directing the Affairs of States, Kingdoms, Cities, Families, and particular Persons, plainly made a very considerable Part of the *Abrahamick* Religion and Theology. This Doctrine of Guardian Angels, or subordinate, tutelar Deities, as commission'd and employ'd by Jehovah in the providential Government of the World, the *Hebrew* Patriarchs, *Jaakob*, and his Family, carry'd into *Egypt* with them; and it cannot be doubted, but the *Egyptians* took it from them. This Notion of Guardian Angels, or subordinate, tutelar Deities in the Government of the World, and all the Dispensations of Providence, being once receiv'd in *Egypt*, was there more and more corrupted, from Time to Time, by the Priests, and propagated from thence to other Countries, till at last it terminated in the grossest Idolatry of the Heathen Nations. The *Egyptians* were great Improvers of Astronomy, and extreamly addicted to judicial Astrology, Divination, and foretelling Things to come by the Positions and Motions of the heavenly Bodies. Having got this Notion of Guardian Angels, and tutelar Gods, or Governors, they gave them Names, and placed them in the chief Luminaries, and Lights of Heaven, as their proper Seats and Habitations, to which they gave the same Names with the Gods supposed to reside there. And now they con-

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sidered Guardians, and subordinate Governors of the World, as Mediators with the supream God, and accordingly paid them a mediatorial Worship. The Planets, or erratic Stars, they made the principal Seats and Residence of the Gods, and in them they were worshiped. The Sun was supposed to be the chief Seat or Throne of the supream God, the great Creator himself; and in, or by the Sun, the great Creator was worshiped, as the Place of his Residence, and liveliest Emblem of his Presence, Power, and Glory. Indeed, this Worship seems to have been *ab origine*, and before the Introduction of tutelar Gods, and was not properly Idolatry, since it was not the Sun itself, but the great Author and God of Nature in the Sun, that was worshiped. But the *Egyptians* having given Names to the Constellations, stock'd them with the tutelar Gods, and drawn them under such Figures and Representations, as they seemed most to resemble, first began to worship the God of the Sun in such and such Constellations, or under such or such Positions, Aspects, and Configurations of the Planets, in which the tutelar Deities were invoked and worshiped, not as supream, but mediatorially only.

This drawing the Constellations under such or such Figures of Animals, or Things without Life, as they seem'd to represent, as the Ram, the Bull, the Lion, the Goat, the Balance,

lance, the Girdle, &c. I take to have been the Original of Images, or worshipping the Gods under such particular Figures and Representations; for under these Figures and Images they worshiped the God of the Sun, or supream God, by the Mediation of such subordinate Deities as were supposed to inhabit the Constellations represented by the Image, according to the different Seasons, or Times of the Year where the Sun then was. The most antient *Egyptians* worshiped chiefly the Sun, or the God of the Sun in *Taurus*, under the Image of a Bull; into which Constellation the Sun entered then about the vernal Equinox, or Beginning of the Spring. And, indeed, this Sort of Worship first propagated from *Egypt*, became almost universal among other Nations. It was this *Egyptian* God, that the *Israelites* were so exceeding fond of, and of which Sort of Idolatry they could never be cured, so long as they had any Inter-course, or Communication with *Egypt*.

It may here be observ'd, that the *Egyptians*, and other heathen, idolatrous Nations, did not worship these Images themselves; they did not worship the dead, inanimate Matter of Wood, Brass, Iron, Stone, &c. of which the Image was composed, but the tutelar, mediatorial God, whose Virtues and special Presence were supposed to reside in the Image, and, as it were, actuate and animate it: But as these Gods were only imaginary, and had

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no real Existence, they could have no real Object of their Worship, but the dead, inanimate Matter; as if any one was to pray to a Corpse, supposing the Soul to be in it, and the Man alive; and yet this very same Sort of stupid Idolatry were the Christians themselves guilty of in the third and fourth Centuries, when they came to pray to the Bones and Relicks of the Martyrs, as the Church of *Rome* retains the same Religion to this Day.

After the great Empires arose, of which that of *Egypt* was the first, and War and Destruction became the common Trade and Business of the World, Idolatry was carry'd to a higher Pitch than ever; for they deify'd their Heroes and great Men, they imagined them to have been begot by the old, cœlestial, immortal Gods, and after Death they sent them to the same Habitations, and gave them the same Names. They built sumptuous Temples and Altars, instituted publick Sacrifices and Festivals to their Memory, and appointed Priests to perform the sacred Rites of invoking and worshipping them. They kept their Statues and Images in their Temples, to perpetuate and revive their Memory; and now the old Figures and Images of the Constellations were laid aside, and human Figures substituted in their Place.

This Practice began first in *Egypt*, and, I think, not till *Solomon's* Time, when *Sesac*,
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or *Sesoftris*, built a Temple to his Father *Ammon*, whose Daughter *Solomon* had taken for his Queen. This *Ammon* was called *Jupiter Ammon*, because the cœlestial, immortal God *Jupiter* was supposed to have begot him. And now the *Egyptians*, and afterward other Nations from them, had a new Race of terrestrial, mortal Gods and Goddeses, which they made of deified or canonized Men and Women, and, who, as they pretended, were the Children and Offspring of the old cœlestial, immortal Gods. I believe it would be difficult to carry this Sort of Idolatry higher than I have here placed it. And, perhaps, this is the first Instance that can be given in which Men were supposed to live, and be immortal after Death, without a Resurrection of the Body: But the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body, indeed, cannot be carried so high; for we find nothing clearly as to this, earlier than *Zoroaster*, the great *Persian* Prophet, who flourished about 400 Years before the Christian Æra.

This Sort of Idolatry, in worshiping deified Men and Women after Death, spread from *Egypt* almost over the whole known World; only the antient *Medes* and *Persians* were never infected with it, which Nations the *Egyptians* never conquered: But after the Greek Conquest under *Alexander* the Great, their Gods, which they had originally taken

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from *Egypt*, broke in like a Deluge, and overspread all *Asia*.

It may be proper to observe here, that Idolatry in *Asia* received a great Check under the *Persian* Monarchy; for the *Persians* having still retained the Knowledge and Worship of the true God, destroy'd all the Heathen Temples and Idols where-ever they came, excepting that of *Diana* of *Ephesus*, which Goddess was afterward the great Idol of all *Asia*, and look'd upon as invincible. It is not therefore true, that the Knowledge and Worship of the true God was retain'd only by the *Jews*, or that any other Nation ever receiv'd this Knowledge and Worship from them.

From this short Account of the Rise and Progress of Idolatry, the Reader will see, that it began with the Notion of guardian, governing Angels, who exercised Authority and Jurisdiction, and dispensed all Good and Evil in particular Kingdoms, Provinces, Tribes and Families, by a Commission and full Power deriv'd from *Jehovah*, or the supream God. This being supposed, it was natural, reasonable, and fit to worship such subordinate, tutelar Gods or Governors of the World, to own their Authority, to submit to their Directions and Dictates, to invoke and apply to them for Blessings and Protection, so far as *Jehovah*, the supream God, had committed the Government of the World to them,
and

and entrusted them with the Care and Guardianship of particular Nations, Tribes, and Families. And that this was the Religion of *Abraham*, and the *Hebrew* Patriarchs, is, I think, too plain to be denied, or to need any farther particular Proof; and the Case of *Jaakob* in *Egypt*, when blessing his Sons upon his Death-Bed, seems to be a very plain and indisputable Instance of it, as has been observed already.

The *Hebrew* Patriarchs, though they worshiped Angels ministerially and mediatorially, admitted of no Image Worship, and did not pretend to confine the Powers and Virtues of those cœlestial, immortal Beings to a Piece of Wood or Stone. But before *Abraham*, we find, that the same Family had worshiped by Images, and that this Sort of Worship had been retain'd in *Nabor's* Family till the Time of *Jaakob*. *Jaakob* lived 20 Years with *Laban*, and took both his Wives out of this idolatrous Family, and *Rachel* at coming away stole her Father's Gods. Perhaps the *Abrahamic* Reformation might consist chiefly in throwing off this Image Worship, and vain Pretence of confining the Power and Presence of the Angels, or immortal Gods, to those Idols and handy-craft Work. *Terah*, the Father of *Abraham*, according to the Eastern Authors quoted by Dr. *Hyde*, had been a celebrated God-Founder in *Mesopotamia*, and amass'd a vast Estate by making such

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such Gods, and confining the divine, cœlestial Powers to Images, the Work of his own Hands. That their Fathers had worshiped such Gods beyond the Flood, *Joshua* tells them, *Josh. xxiv. 2.* And that *Abraham*, upon the Death of *Terah*, was expell'd the Country for this Reformation against the antient Gods of his Family and Nation, we are informed from a very antient *Hebrew* Record, *Judith v. 7, 8.* But in *Egypt* they fell into the same Sort of Idolatry again, where it was carried to a much more extravagant Height than ever. And this shews, that the *Abrahamic* Reformation from Idolatry had been very imperfect; for though *Abraham* had rejected all Image Worship, yet he still retain'd the mediatorial Worship of Angels, which had been the Rise and Foundation of it. We have no Account, nor the least Intimation of any Idolatry or Image Worship in *Egypt*, till they had taken the Notion of guardian, governing Angels, or local, tutelar Gods, from the *Hebrews*. And then it was easy for their Statesmen, Priests, and Politicians, to persuade the People, that these cœlestial Beings might be brought down from Heaven, retained among them, and represented under some visible, sensible Symbols of their Power and Presence. *Moses*, indeed, imitated the *Abrahamic* Reformation so far, that he absolutely rejected and prohibited all Image Worship: But then his confounding the

the local, tutelar, oracular God of *Israel* with Jehovah the supream God, as if Jehovah had been their tutelar God and Protector, their Lord of Hosts, or God of War, exclusive of all other Nations; this, I say, was introducing a Scheme of Superstition and false Religion, more gross and more mischievous than ever had been known before, even in *Egypt* itself: For though *Moses* had cast off all Images, yet he still retain'd the visible, sensible Symbols of the Presence, Power, and constant, local Residence of his national, tutelar God, and instituted a Priesthood and Worship, in all Respects analogous to that of *Egypt*: A Worship that was to enrich the Priests, impoverish the People, and secure the supream Power of the Kingdom, by an eternal, uninterrupted Succession and Right of Inheritance, in the Tribe of *Levi*, and House of *Aaron*. For though the *Mosaic* Jehovah was not to be drawn or represented under any Figure, Form, or Shape, yet his local, circumscriptive Presence was always shown by a luminous Glory over the Ark. And there the God was supposed to sit fix'd and immoveable, from his Seat to give out his Oracle with an audible Voice on all Emergencies and great Occasions, when the Priest should consult him.

If this *Mosaic Jehovah*, or local, tutelar, oracular God of *Israel*, was not an Idol after the Manner of *Egypt*, I think there was never

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ver any such Thing in the World. Whoever has read *Cicero's* Book *de Divinatione*, must see, that it was the Opinion of that learned heathen Moralist, that there never was, or had been any *Oracle* in the World, but the *Priest*. And he thought it impracticable and chimerical to set up any new Religion among the Populace of any Country, but what should bear a very near Analogy and Resemblance to the old Religion, which they had been taken off from. *Cicero* had, doubtless, been confirmed in this Opinion by all his Knowledge and Experience of the World, and by the History of all the past Ages. For sure I am, that all History since, has confirmed the same Thing to us in later Ages.

When the *Roman* Empire had been converted to Christianity, and this new Religion had been *establish'd by Law*, and enforced by the *Civil Powers*, the People fell into a worse State of Idolatry, if possible, than before. They had parted with, and discarded their old Gods, but they did not alter any Thing of the Form, or outward Appearance of Religion. They continued the same Sacrifices and public Festivals to their own Saints and Martyrs; they dedicated their Churches and Temples to them; they prayed to, and invoked them, and paid the same Sort of Worship to them that they had done to the heathen Idols before. The Miracles, which are recorded to have been wrought in the fourth Century,

Century, by praying to, and worshipping even the Bones and Relicks of the Martyrs, are more numerous and more extraordinary, than ever had been wrought by Christ and the Apostles. And as soon as they had been freed from the heathen Persecutions, shut up their Temples, and seized all their Lands, they fell to persecuting one another with more Outrage and Fury, than ever the Heathens had done; and within a hundred Years Christians from Christians suffered more than ever Christians had suffered from Heathens. *Irenæus* was the first great Heretic-Founder; for he made Heretics of all who could not believe as the Church believes, or who carried Things so far for themselves, as to refuse Episcopal Obedience. This persecuting Spirit, and Pretence to *Infallibility* by *supernatural Revelation*, was, doubtless, taken from the *Jews*, which made *reveal'd Christianity*, at first, as much a Picture of *Judaism*, as it was of *Heathenism* afterwards; and thus we see how one popular Scheme came from another.

It was the very same Thing here at our Reformation from Popery. We were taken off from some of the grosser and more palpable Absurdities of Popery, such as Transubstantiation, Saint and Image Worship, Purgatory, papal Indulgences, &c. But for the rest, the outward Forms and Appearances of Religion were still the same: The People had the same Offices for Births, Marriages, Burials,

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rials, Visitations of the Sick, and priestly Pardons and Absolutions as before; and they were told, that the Liturgy, which they had now in *English*, was only a Translation of their old *Latin* Mass-Book. So necessary it is, in all popular Changes of Religion, to keep up the Show and Appearance of the old, whatever it might have been. And I can by no Means blame this as ill Policy, or censure any State or Government for it. The Priests have always, and every where had the Government and Direction of the People's Consciences; and the State can go no farther than they will let them. Church-Power, and a spiritual Jurisdiction over Conscience, having been vested by Christ and the Apostles in the Ministers of the Gospel, but very few States have ever dared to break in upon this *Jus Divinum*. *Moses* and *Aaron*, for ought we know, were the two first Politicians that ever claim'd this Authority by Revelation. And, therefore, I thought a little farther Enquiry about this, might serve, *instar omnium*, to settle all the rest.

I shall therefore here make one Supposition, which may be allow'd, for Argument's Sake, That *Moses* and *Aaron* were mere worldly Politicians, who had laid a Scheme in Confederacy for aggrandizing their own Tribe and Family. Upon this Supposition, I say, the whole Constitution, and every Part of it, may be

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be easily accounted for, when it cannot upon any other.

Dean *Prideaux*, in his Letter to the Deists, affix'd to his Life of *Mabomet*, has laid down a certain Criterion, or Rule of Judgment, whereby to detect any Scheme of Imposture, which may be advanced and established under a Pretence of Religion, or a Revelation from God. He observes, that any Scheme of mere human Policy, advanced under a Notion of divine Authority, must detect and discover itself in the Frame, Texture, and Contrivance of the whole Plan; that some secular, carnal Interest of the Politician, and his principal Aim at Wealth and Dominion, must always betray him, and expose his Imposture. Upon this Principle and Rule of Judgment, the Dean proves very clearly, that Christ and the Apostles could not be Impostors, nor, consequently, their Religion any Imposture. Now I own this Principle and Rule of Judgment to be just and right, and accordingly admit all that he has drawn from it: But then, I hope, he would give me Leave to try the *Mosaic* Constitution by the same Rule; and this is what I am resolv'd to do, whether the Gentlemen, in his Way of thinking, would give me Leave, or not; and to this Purpose, I must beg Leave to make the following Observations.

I. Upon this Supposition, it is evident and obvious, at first Sight, why all Idolatry, or
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any Appearance or Tendency that Way ought to be punished with Death. For if the High Priest himself had the supream Power, the Command of the Oracle, and the decisive Judgment in all Cases, upon the ultimate Appeal: If he was the local, tutelar, oracular God of *Israel*; 'tis very plain, that whatever tended to lessen his Revenues, to sink his Authority, or to shew him the least Disrespect or Contempt, must be a fundamental Breach of the Constitution. And, therefore, had it not been made capital, no such Government could have long subsisted. This is a very plain Reason, why all their Tythes and legal Offerings should be Deodands, their defrauding the Priest, or lessening his Revenues, robbing of God, or pouring Contempt on the local, oracular Jehovah, and why the Name *Jehovah* should be every where, throughout the whole Institution, put for *Priest*. When they worshiped any other national, tutelar Gods, they defrauded their own God of his legal Rights and Dues, and enrich'd other *Priests*, or other *Gods*, while their own was left destitute of the lawful Means of maintaining himself in the same State and Grandeur.

2. From hence we see the Reason in human Policy, why this Law was made perpetual and unalterable, that no legislative Power was to remain in the Kingdom for ever after, and no Change of Persons or Circumstances to be considered, or allowed under this Law.

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All other Magistrates and civil Rulers, in all other States and Kingdoms, have found it necessary, from Time to Time, to alter particular Laws and Statutes, as Times and Circumstances alter; and to make new Laws, or alter or repeal the old, as the different emerging Cases and Situation of Affairs may require. But had there been here any such Power or Liberty granted, no Doubt but the burdensome Law of the Priesthood would soon have been altered, and the Nation would have freed themselves from this insufferable Yoke, by the very first Repeal, or new Law they had made. But as they could not do this, they had a perpetual Slavery and Vassalage to their spiritual Governors, intail'd upon them as long as the Law should continue in Force.

3. Hence in human Policy, we see the Reason why the *Levites* had no Inheritance, or Part of the Country thrown all together like the other Tribes. They were to be dispersed all through the Country, and had more Cities and Lands given them in Proportion, than any other Tribe; yet *the Lord was to be their Inheritance*: They were disposed of all through the Country, to give them an Opportunity of inspecting the Affairs of every Family, to make proper Information and Convictions in Case of any legal Forfeitures, and to take Care that Jehovah might not be cheated of his Due; and in the mean while,

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without any Labour or Industry of their own, they were to live richly upon the publick Gifts and Offerings, or such Perquisites as they might make from Connivance, or Hush-Money, where the Rigour of the Law could not be comply'd with.

4. From this Principle of human, carnal Policy, we may very clearly account for the strict Separation and rigid Boundaries that were made between this, and all other Nations, by the Law. They were not to eat or drink, or cohabit, or intermarry, or maintain any friendly Intercourse or Communication with People of any other Nation or Religion. They were taught to look upon all other Nations as abandoned, reprobate, accursed of God; and were made believe, that the true God, and the most powerful God, was the God of *Israel* only; that he was constantly resident among them, and while they served this God, and had him to go in and out with them, and head their Armies, no other Nation, or their Gods, would ever be able to stand before them. Thus they were settled in a national, constitutional Prejudice, Aversion, and Hatred to all other Nations, and in a strong, invincible Persuasion, that the Lord of Hosts, the God of *Israel*, or their God of War, would conquer all other Gods, and drive out all Nations before them, at least the *Canaanite* Nations. This was certainly the best Principle in human

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man Policy that could be impress'd or instill'd for a general Conquest. This must have carried a Nation in Conquest so far as the Power of Enthusiasm could go, which is vastly great, and which *Moses* seems to have understood perfectly well. All this might be right enough in human Policy, but to take it in a religious View, nothing can be more absurd or contradictory. Is it possible, that this Nation should ever be a Blessing to all other Nations, by carrying Fire and Sword through all the World about them, as they did in *Canaan*? Or did they ever convince one *Canaanite* of their divine Right, or of the Justice and Equity of their God, by putting them all to the Sword? Had God ever intended this Nation to preserve and propagate the true Religion, or the Knowledge and Worship of the true God, no Doubt but he would have instituted an Order of Apostles and divine Missionaries among them, that should have gone through the World, and preached the true God, and true Way of worshipping him to all the heathen Nations, at the Hazard and Loss of their Lives, and without any Views of Conquest, and possessing other Mens Properties. But we find nothing of this in the Institutions of *Moses*: Nothing strongly inculcated and impressed upon the People, but the superior, invincible Power of their God, and their Certainty of Conquest, and of carrying Desolation

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and Destruction before them, so long as they kept close to their own Lord of Hosts, or God of War, and truly worshiped him.

5. The gross, external, and mere carnal *Egyptian* Worship, instituted by this Law, the vast Expensiveness of it to the People, and exorbitant Profit of it to the Priests, *Levites*, and spiritual Government, can only be accounted for from human Policy, and cannot be reconciled to any Thing of true internal Religion. *Egyptianism* before had been the same Sort of Religion, as Popery has been since, with all the Arts of Church-Power and Priestcraft. Besides, the stated legal Revenues to the Sanctuary and holy Tribe, the occasional Fines and Forfeitures in Cleansings and Purifications of one Sort or other, were innumerable, and cannot be reduced to any certain Computation. In every one of these there was a Deodand to be paid, or Offering to the Priest; and out of these the informing *Levites* must have made good Perquisites, for favouring the Information, and not making the worst of the Case, or going to the Rigour of the Law. Here may, perhaps, be good Policy, but no Religion.

6. The carnal Indulgences to personal Intemperance, allow'd or left at Liberty under this Law, without any legal, civil Sanction, or Punishment, plainly prove it to have been a Scheme of mere carnal, worldly Policy, and that there could have been nothing of Religion,

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Religion, Revelation, or divine Institution in it. The Laws relating to Civil Right and Property, between Man and Man, were very just and equitable, and much the same that had been observ'd in *Egypt*, by the *Hebrew* Patriarchs, before their going down thither, and by all wise States and governed Societies. But the Laws relating to the Priesthood, the supream Authority of the Nation, and the publick Revenues, were most enormously rigid and severe; and, at the same Time, I think the Indulgences given, or not restrain'd by Law, to personal Intemperance, and private Debauchery, were such as plainly prove, that *Moses* and *Aaron* had something else in View, besides Religion, and the true Worship of God.

The numerous Exactions of the Law in Tithes, Offerings, Forfeitures, Gifts, and Dedands, of one Sort or other, were so very great and exorbitant, that some sensual Indulgences might seem necessary to make the People the more easy under their Burdens, and reconcile them to such a Government; and, therefore, no legal Penalty was provided against an Excess in Wine, or Women. A Man might keep as many Wives or Concubines as he thought fit, and turn them off at Pleasure, to exchange them for new, and gratify his Lust with the greater Variety: Nay, any Man might put his Wife to the Trial of Jealousy, in which it would be in

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the Power, and at the Discretion of the Priest, either to save or poison her.

This must have put all the Wives in the Country into the Priest's Hands, who, upon this Trial, which was for Life and Death, were at the Priest's Devotion. Had the Priest himself been the guilty Person, or Person suspected, no Doubt but he would bring her off innocent: But if the Woman should have disoblig'd him in any Respect, or he had found she was not for his Purpose, he might make the Draught or Dose fatal to her. This Story the Reader will find in *Numb. v. 11—31.* and my farther Account of it, *Mor. Philosoph. Vol. II. p. 267—270.*

This would now sound like a very odd Story in the Ears of Christian Women, and even though a *Christian Jewish* Priest should be at the Table, who would hardly be ever welcome there more: But this absolute, despotic Power in the Men, and absolute Dependance and Vassalage of the Women, was once, it seems, the Law and Ordination of God. But the Christian Women may thank God, that this Revelation has been repeal'd by another Revelation.

7. But 'tis now high Time to put this Revelation to a general Trial, with Regard to *divine and human Authority.* Every Body seems now to allow, that the Law of *Moses* was only external, civil, and political. This is not only admitted, but warmly contended for

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for by some late learned Writers. But yet they say, that the Law was the Law, and immediate Institution of God, and that consequently Obedience to it was religious Obedience. I know no other Principle of Religion, but that it is our Obedience to the Will and Law of God. If God should command us to worship him, or pray to him only in this, or that particular Posture or Dress, this Posture or Dress would immediately become a Part of that Religion: But had this Posture or Dress been left free, and at Choice, it could have been no more a Part of the *Religion*, than a Part of the *Man*. In this Case even the least Circumstance as commanded and instituted, must be essential to the Religion, and no Distinction can be made between *religious* and *civil Law* under a *Theocracy*. There is certainly a necessary, essential Distinction between the real, internal Love of God, and our Neighbour, and the outward Modes and Forms of expressing it, as much as there is between a Man's Heart, and his Clothes: But to make one as essential and necessary as the other in Religion, might be thought exceedingly ridiculous.

There could be no real Difference or Distinction between Law and Religion, or between human and divine Authority under a Theocracy, where God himself was the Lawgiver; and therefore it may be worth while to consider, how the Patrons of a bad,

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civil Constitution, or national Polity, can justify it under the Name or Notion of a *Theocracy*.

We will suppose and admit, that external, civil Obedience to moral Law, ought to be enforced by civil and temporal Sanctions; and this I take to be the proper and only Province of *human Authority*. But then, ought not the internal Part of this Obedience, a right Temper and Disposition of Mind, and Principle of Action, ought not this to be enforced by the proper Sanctions of Religion, the Rewards and Punishments of another World? Or had *Moses* no Regard to a future State, or to any internal, *true Religion*, provided he could but secure an outward Conformity to his Law, and gain his Ends as a Politician? Or will these learned Men say, that the Doctrine of the Immortality, and separate, personal Existence of human Souls, was not known so early as the Days of *Moses*, but was left to a farther *Egyptian* Discovery afterward? I hope they will say no such Thing; for surely if no Body else at that Time had known any Thing of the Personality of separate Souls, or a future Resurrection of the Body, and Restoration of the same Person, *Moses* being so intimate with God, must have had it by *Revelation*. And if he understood this, and did not communicate it in his Law, or make any Use of it to the Purposes of real, internal Virtue, and true Religion, I cannot

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cannot see how he can be justify'd, either as a good Politician, or honest Man. This seems to be as difficult a Phænomenon in *Religion* as any Thing can be in *Nature*; and, as I believe no other Sort of Philosophers in the World can do it, I must leave the Solution of it to our *School Divines*.

From what has been said, I might now leave the Reader to judge, whether the *Mosaic* Constitution can be justify'd, either as a divine or human Institution, or as a right Scheme of *Religion*, or State *Policy*. And I might now leave this to the Judgment and Decision of the Publick, was I never to say any more: But having some learned Men and late Writers to answer, I must trouble the Reader a little farther in Defence of the *Moral Philosopher*.

C H A P. I.

THE Rev. Dr. Leland, in his second Volume of *The divine Authority of the Old and New Testament asserted, &c.* which he calls an Answer to the second Volume of the *Moral Philosopher*, has done me some peculiar Honours, which I thought necessary, with not much Loss of Time, to acknowledge. He assures his Reader in the Preface, that my having given myself the
Name

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Name of *Philaethes*, and declaring that I had no other View, or Aim in Writing, *but to serve and promote the Cause of Truth, Peace, and Righteousness, and to separate the true Religion from that Superstition which has always prov'd the Bane and Destruction of it; that this Declaration of mine must rest only upon my own Word and Authority, for otherwise no Man could ever have believed any such Thing.* “If I really intended to be an Advocate for Truth and Religion, I am certainly one of the most unhappy Advocates that ever appear'd, since the Methods I make Use of are fit only to serve Error and Imposture, and are enough to disgrace the best Cause in the World.”

I had declared, in my first Volume, that if any Man made Reprizals upon me in this Controversy, *I would chearfully submit to the keenest Revenges of Truth and Reason, and be always ready to own the great Advantage and Honour of being thus conquered: And that if in attempting to serve the Cause of Virtue and true Religion I had miss'd my Aim, I had put it in the Power of my Adversary by setting me right, to lay me under the strongest Obligations of Gratitude and Respect.* “Dr. Leland endeavoured to answer this Invitation of mine, and by detecting my Mistakes and Misrepresentations, gave me an Opportunity of rectifying them: But this, instead of engaging my Acknowledgments, has only
“ raised

" raised my Indignation; and I seem resolv'd
 " to let the World see, what a dangerous
 " Thing it is to engage a Writer of my Im-
 " portance," *Preface*, p. 3, 4, 5. " Though
 " I absolutely deny the Infallibility of the
 " *Hebrew* Historians, I act as if I was my-
 " self infallible, and have not had the Grace
 " to acknowledge, or retract any one Error
 " that he had convinced me of, though se-
 " veral of them are so gross, that 'tis impos-
 " sible to defend them. When I am most
 " press'd, the Way I take to justify myself,
 " is to persist in what I had advanced, and
 " assert it with greater Confidence than be-
 " fore; at the same Time assuring my Read-
 " er, that he [the Rev. Doctor] had not said
 " one Word to the Purpose.—And to this
 " I usually add, that all that was offered a-
 " gainst me, was mere impertinent Decla-
 " mation and Harangue; and then make a
 " fearful Outcry against *Systems* and *School*
 " *Divinity*. When I have nothing else to
 " say in Answer to an Argument, it is but to
 " call it *systematical*. And the Doctor thinks
 " the World will acquit me from the Charge
 " of being a *systematical Writer myself*, since
 " it does not appear from any Thing I have
 " said, that I have any *consistent Scheme* of
 " Principles at all. The Reader is desired to
 " observe, that though I allow myself an un-
 " bounded Liberty with the Characters of
 " others, I am extremely sensible and tender-

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“ of my own ; and tho’ I complain heavily
 “ as if he had used me ill, he knows no In-
 “ stance in which he has done so, except by
 “ detecting my Misrepresentations, laying
 “ open the Injustice and Falshood of my
 “ Aspersions, and shewing the Weakness of
 “ my Reasonings. And this, he says, he
 “ had sufficient Reason to do, and shall have
 “ farther Occasion to do it again : And if this
 “ should expose me, it is what I have drawn
 “ upon myself, and who can help it? He
 “ has taken no particular Notice of my Pre-
 “ face, because this is only a Heap of loose,
 “ rambling Reflexions, on *Superstition*, the
 “ *Clergy*, *supernatural Doctrines*, the *Proof*
 “ from *Miracles*, placing Religion upon Au-
 “ thority, *spiritual Scholasticism*, and *biblical*
 “ *Infallibility* : But these Things the learned
 “ Doctor has already, or will farther confi-
 “ der, so far as is necessary.” This is an Ab-
 stract, or rather Copy, *mutatis mutandis*, of
 Dr. Leland’s Preface, in which he boldly bids
 Defiance, and promises fair. But how far
 he has made good his Word, what Errors of
 mine he has confuted, and set aside, or what
 one Principle of his own he has supported
 and secured, I am now to examine and
 consider.

I had complain’d, and, I think, very just-
 ly, that this Author continually used the
 Words Christianity, Inspiration, Revelation,
 &c. without any fix’d, determinate Meaning,
 or

or without once letting us know what the peculiar Doctrines and Duties of this Revelation are, as distinct from the Religion of Nature. Now here, instead of removing the Difficulty, or taking off the Objection, he endeavours to lead his Reader into a Wood, and would fain make him believe, that I had used the Word *Revelation*, in as doubtful and indeterminate a Sense as he. But supposing this to have been so, would my Obscurity justify his? Or ought he not to have prov'd against me, that there are some peculiar Doctrines and Duties of Revelation, which are above and beyond all Search, Investigation, and Judgment of Reason; Truths and Doctrines, which could never have been discover'd or known by any natural Use of Reason, without such a Revelation? This is what I have constantly and consistently deny'd, as the Author himself, and all the World must know. And could this learned Dignitary have prov'd the contrary, his very Introduction, or any one of his Chapters, might have saved him all the rest of his Labour. But after he had wrapt himself up in Clouds and Darkness, he finds it now a very difficult Matter to prove, that he had been still in the open, clear Light. I had constantly and consistently asserted, that natural and reveal'd Religion are the same, as to their Subject-Matter, or the Doctrines and Duties themselves, and differ only in the different

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Way

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Way and Manner of Conveyance and Teaching. And accordingly I never use the Word *Revelation*, for any supposed Truth or Doctrines above Reason, but for such Doctrines of moral Truth and Rectitude, as Men receive upon the real or supposed Authority of the Prophet or Teacher. Here it is the Authority and Manner of Conveyance and Teaching, that gives it the Name of *Revelation*, but its necessary Foundation in Nature and Reason makes it a *true Doctrine*, and the Authority or Manner of Conveyance and Teaching cannot alter, or affect this. Nothing that is antecedently and necessarily true in Nature and Reason, can depend on Authority for the Truth of it, since that very Authority itself must depend on the same Nature and Reason of Things. The same Truths or Doctrines may be receiv'd and adher'd to, either upon original, native Evidence, as founded in Nature and Reason, or by Authority from others, without any other Reason or Ground of Truth to those who thus take them upon Trust. There are few thinking, inquisitive Persons, now among us, but know something of the *Newtonian* Philosophy, and the Laws of Nature demonstrated by that great Philosopher; but the Generality receive it only upon Trust, and from the Authority of those whom they take to be proper Judges, and who can have no Interest or Design to deceive them. It must be
own'd,

own'd, that this Way of receiving Truth from Authority has its Use, and may be of great Advantage to the Bulk of Mankind. But then it must be allow'd too, that this is a more imperfect Ground of Truth, and that they who take it in this Way, are more liable to Error and Deception. And, therefore, we find *Religion* itself has been always a very doubtful, disputable Thing among those who thus take it from Authority, and upon Trust; whereas it is, and must be always the same Thing as founded in Nature and Reason; and the common Pretence here of Revelation, and divine Authority, when Men go off from the moral Truth and Evidence, may serve, indeed, to divide and inflame Mankind, and answer the Purposes of the several Heads and Leaders of Parties, but can never tend to clear up, and reconcile any Thing.

I had ventured to guess at our Author's Notion of the *true sound Faith*, which he opposes to *Infidelity*; and I imagin'd it might consist in a firm, indubitable Belief of the infallible Truth and Certainty of the whole biblical History, especially as to the supernatural, miraculous Parts of it, where the Things are least probable, or credible in themselves, and concerning which we must be therefore most liable to Error and Deception. But he assures me, for my Satisfaction, that he is not quite so rigid as I might take him to be. " If any Man should be of Opinion, that
" in

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“ in some Facts related in the sacred Writ-
 “ ings, there are Mistakes, whether owing
 “ to the Negligence of Transcribers, or even
 “ in some smaller Instances, to Inadverten-
 “ ces, or Forgetfulness of the original Histo-
 “ rians; or if he should doubt of some par-
 “ ticular Books belonging to the sacred Ca-
 “ non; though I should think him mistaken,
 “ yet if at the same Time he believ’d the
 “ Fidelity of the sacred Historians, and the
 “ Truth and *Certainty* of all the main Facts,
 “ whereby the Christian Revelation was at-
 “ tested, and did accordingly receive the
 “ Doctrines and Laws there taught and en-
 “ join’d, as a *Revelation from God*, and, con-
 “ sequently, as of *divine Authority*; I would
 “ be far from *branding* him as an *Infidel*, or
 “ an Enemy to *divine Revelation*,” p. 6, 7.

The Reverend Doctor has here granted some
 Things however, and, perhaps, more than
 he intended, and what we shall soon find
 him retracting. He grants, that not only
 the Transcribers, but even the original Histo-
 rians, might be mistaken in *some Things*, and
 that these original Historians, or their after
 Copiers, which we cannot now distinguish,
 may have given us some *whole Books*, as of
divine Authority, which really are not so:
 But if they might have been mistaken in ma-
 ny Things, and even in the divine Authority
 of *whole Books*, why might they not have
 been mistaken all along, and substituted *hu-*

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man instead of *divine* Authority? What Criterion or Rule of Judgment has our learned Divine in this Case, or how does he know what Allowances he ought, or ought not to make? If this learned Author should allow one Thing, one false Piece of History, or wrong Book clapt into the Canon, and another should allow other false Stories, or mistaken divine Books, they might, at last, between them, give up every Thing that is contended for, as I verily believe they have already, though they scarce ever grant any Thing, without resuming it again as soon as they have need of it. But as to such little Matters, this learned Divine would not insist upon them, provided a Man believed the *Fidelity* of the *sacred Historians*, and all the *main* Facts whereby the *Revelation* was attested. But why might not a Man believe the *Fidelity* of these *Historians*, without believing their *Infallibility*? They might be *honest* and *undesigning*, and yet be very much mistaken, both with Regard to Facts and Doctrines too; there might be a great deal of *Enthusiasm* and Superstition, without any Thing of *Imposture*. But what are these *main Facts*, and what is the *Revelation* that was proved and attested by them? Did this *Revelation* consist in the Truth and Certainty of the Being of a God, of his moral Perfections, and of his righteous Government and Judgment of the World? Or did these *main Facts* prove the necessary,

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demonstrable Doctrines and Obligations of moral Truth and Righteousness, with Regard to God, our Neighbour, and ourselves? These Doctrines and Duties of moral Truth and Righteousness are certainly more evident in themselves, and in the Nature and Reason of Things, than this Doctor's *main Facts* can ever be, made by all the Testimony in the World. But however, though a Man should believe and practise all these Doctrines and Duties of moral Truth and Righteousness, as they are founded in Nature and Reason, in the moral Perfections of God, and the Relation of Man to him, as his Creature and Subject; yet still this Reverend Doctor would make no Scruple to *brand* him as an *Infidel*, if he did not believe his *main Facts*. 'Tis plain, therefore, in his own Account, that he uses the Word *Infidel* as a *Brand*, and, consequently, as a Character *highly immoral*. So dangerous a Thing it is to meddle in Controversy with Men of this Temper, or to dispute *Facts* with them, upon which they lay the whole Stress and Weight of *Religion*; but what *Religion* that is, which must rest on the Credit of these *main Facts*, and which was not as evident in Nature and Reason before, this dignify'd Divine has not yet thought fit to tell us, and, I believe, never will.

I had call'd on him for his Proof of the infallible Truth and Certainty of his historical Facts: I had deny'd all historical Infallibility,

or proper Certainty of Sense, especially with Regard to supernatural Appearances, in which we are most liable to Deception, by ascribing them to wrong Causes, and when these Facts too are produced to prove a Religion or Revelation above Reason. Instead of answering to any Thing of this, he goes on, for several Pages, as usual, to harangue upon the Clearness and Evidence of the original Facts, and the undoubted Credit and Veracity of the Historians and first Witnesses, who have handed them down to us. But he ought to have proved, had he been able, that these original Historians and Witnesses might not as well be deceiv'd as other Men, or that they might not, through Ignorance or Prejudice, relate Things as supernatural, which were not so, but ascribed to wrong Causes; or he should have proved, that we have now the Accounts of all these Things from the first Eye and Ear-Witnesses, that the Stories have gain'd or lost nothing in transmitting, or that nothing was afterwards taken up with, and recorded only by Hearsay and Report by later Authors, when the Facts themselves were out of Memory. This has certainly been often the Case in all other History; and I know of no Promise from God, or any divine Security, that this History should be preserv'd more from Corruption, or transmitted purer to all future Ages, than any other antient History.

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But the great Hardship of the Case is still behind; for when all these Facts are supposed, or even granted, the Author knows not what Use to make of them, or what that Religion or Revelation is, which they were intended to prove, and which could not otherwise have been known. Here he still sticks in the Mire, and after all his Strugglings, cannot disengage himself. He has a Religion founded in *Sense* above *Reason*, and had rather trust to other Mens Eye-Sight, or to the most distant Reports of it, than to his own Understanding. But what this Religion or Revelation is, we should be glad to know.

I had urged, that if the Morality of the Scriptures be Revelation, all other Morality must be Revelation; and that we could have no more Reason to believe one History to be a Matter of Revelation, than any other History. “ *But it does not follow*, says he, *that if* “ *I believe the moral Doctrines of Scripture* “ *to be by divine Revelations, and the histo-* “ *rical Accounts of the extraordinary Facts* “ *there contain'd, to have been written un-* “ *der the unerring Guidance of the divine* “ *Spirit, that therefore I must believe all Mo-* “ *rality, and all History, to be Revelation;* “ *except it can be proved, that I have the* “ *same Reason to believe all other Writ-* “ *ers of Morals, or Doctrines in Religion,* “ *to have been extraordinarily inspired by* “ *God, as I have to believe, that Moses and* “ the

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“ the Prophets, or Christ and the Apostles were
“ so; and that all other Historians were un-
“ der a divine Guidance, as those who writ
“ the Accounts of the Facts in the Law and
“ Gospels,” p. 10, 11. It is a Matter of no
Consequence at all to me, what this Author
believes in the Case, or what Reasons he may
have for his Belief, which I cannot answer till
he may be pleased to offer them. But I have
given my Reasons why I think, that neither
Moses, and the Prophets, nor even the Apostles
themselves, were infallible, or under any
unerring Guidance; and when he has answered
these Reasons of mine, I shall consider the
Matter farther. As for Christ himself, we
have nothing at all written by him, but must
depend intirely on the Credit of his Disciples,
who were very apt to mistake him, and continued,
from first to last, under a general, grand
Delusion, concerning the Nature of his Kingdom,
and Design of his Mission. I think I have
sufficiently proved this, and shall be ready
either to support or retract it, as Occasion
may be offered.

From Page 10, for ten or twelve Pages together,
the Author quotes several Passages from me,
in which I had supposed and argued, that
natural and reveal'd Religion are essentially
and subjectively the same, and that the
necessary Doctrines and Duties of both are
the very same. He grants this to be true in
great Measure, and that *natural* Religion, for

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the most Part, is reveal'd Religion too. But still he has a Reserve for some Doctrines and Obligations of great Necessity and Importance, that are Matters of mere and pure Revelation, and that no Use or Exercise of Reason could otherwise have known or discovered. Now I only want to know, what this pure Revelation is, which could never have been known or found out by any Use or Exercise of human Reason; and what those particular reveal'd Doctrines or Duties are, which this Revelation contains and enjoins, as of great Importance and Necessity to our Salvation, and Acceptance with God. Here the Author is visibly plunged, and the more he works himself, the faster he seems to stick. I have said nothing against the Use of Teaching by *Authority*, provided the Authority itself be not first supposed, and taken as granted, and then made the sole Judge and Arbitrator of what is rational and fit to be done. But I deny, that any sensible Appearances, let them be supernatural, miraculous, or what they will, can prove an Authority superior to Reason, or establish any doctrinal Truths, of which Reason itself must not be the ultimate Judge, as superior to, and independent of any mere authoritative Rule.

I had observed, that divine Authority, founded on human Authority, as its only Proof, must be liable to all the Weakness, Uncertainty, and Defects of such human

Authority; and I must own, that I thought this as clear and undeniable, as any Proposition in *Euclid*. But our Author says, *that all the Strength of this lies wholly in the Obscurity of it, and in jumbling Things together, which are of distinct Consideration*, p. 22. Here he observes, that it is one Thing to ask, what the original, genuine Proof of a divine Revelation is, and another Question to ask, how we can know, or be ascertain'd, that any such original Proof had been really given. I know as well as he, that these are different Questions, and I never in the least confounded them. No Doubt but divine Authority in itself, and the Proof of it to us, are different Things; but then, I say, the divine Authority, with Respect to us, can be no surer than the Proof of it, unless we could be infallibly assured of a divine Authority, without any Proof at all, or with only a fallible, precarious Proof; for this, as I said, would be supposing the Conclusion stronger than the Premises, or the Superstructure firmer and securer than the Foundation. For the Question here is not concerning divine Authority in itself, or abstracting from any Judgment to be formed about it, but from the Authority already supposed and granted, but only concerning the Proof of it, and, consequently, how far we may safely depend on it. But I hope it will be granted, that I can depend on no Authority beyond the Evidence, as appearing to me,

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and that consequently no Obligation can arise from it to me, that shall be clearer or stronger than the Proof of its being really such an Authority: But if this Proof should be weak, fallible, and uncertain, the Authority and Obligation itself must be thus far so to me. The Author shifts and twists himself upon this through several Pages, which yet must have been evident at first Sight, to a Man of less Discernment. It is upon the same confused Jumble of Things, as he pretends, that I charge him, that his Scheme necessarily leads to place the most important, or divine Truth upon the Foot of human, fallible Authority, *p. 24.* It is very true, that I had brought this Charge against him, which I here do again; and let him get rid of it as well as he can. It can signify nothing to tell me, that he builds his whole Scheme upon infallible, divine Authority, while he has no Foundation for that divine Authority, nor for his original Facts, but *fallible, human Authority*; and, therefore, must leave him to make the best of such a bad Matter.

The Author, in his first Chapter, for ten or twelve Pages together, affects to throw himself into great Doubts and Uncertainty about my Meaning. He had thoroughly confuted me so far as he understood me; and where he did not do it effectually, it was, because he could not understand me. He can hardly guess what I mean by natural Relations of Things,

Things, or the moral Fitness of Actions, as founded in Nature and Reason, and being the proper Evidence and Ground of Truth, antecedent to all Authority whatever. He cannot well understand my Distinction between Matters of Reason, and Matters of Fact, or between Principles and Actions. He cannot conceive why Principles and Doctrines of Reason, as well as *Facts*, may not be equally received, known, and understood by *Authority*; nay, by mere fallible, human Authority; for this, in the Way he takes, is the only Medium of Proof, and the only Ground upon which he can rest his most sacred, *divine Authority*. The excellent and truly learned Dr. *Samuel Clarke*, in his Book of natural and reveal'd Religion, having clearly prov'd, that there must be an eternal, immutable Rule of Rectitude, natural Relation of Things, and moral Fitness of Actions, as founded in Nature and Reason, antecedent to all positive Will or Law whatever; he from hence concludes, that what is thus antecedently right, reasonable, and fit, must likewise be the positive Will and Law of God, who cannot but act and will agreeable to natural Order, and moral Fitness. Now this was proving the Authority, Will, and Law of God, concerning our Duty and moral Obligations, *a priori*, from the Nature and Reason of Things, and not resolving all, like this Author, into Authority; and this, as to all practical

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tical Intents and Purposes, into *human Authority*, upon which, in his Way, the Credit of his original *main Facts*, and *divine Authority*, must intirely depend. Let but the Credit of his original Facts be overthrown, and set aside, and then with him all divine Authority is gone, and Religion will have no Foundation left. But whatever this Author, and some others may think, I can assure them, that I would not have my Religion, or my Faith, Hope, and Trust in God stand upon any such Bottom. And, if I am not greatly mistaken, they hereby give real Infidels, and the real Enemies of Religion, such a Handle against them, that they would never be able to convince them, or to maintain the Argument against them upon such Principles.

I had said, that Truth is in Nature and Reason prior to all Authority; and, therefore, Authority cannot be the proper Ground, or natural Evidence and Proof of Truth. I was here, as every one must see, speaking of rational, doctrinal Truth, according to the Distinction which I have always made, and not of the bare Truth of Facts, which we can only take upon Authority, where we have not the direct, immediate Evidence of Sense. This is what I have every where supposed and admitted; and 'tis a Distinction which runs through the Whole, and upon which I had been very large and particular: But the Author upon this, *p.* 41. thus argues: "If the

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“ Meaning be, and it is the only Sense in
“ which it can be admitted, that a Thing
“ must be true in itself, before any Authority
“ can shew it to be so, this will be easily own’d;
“ but it is nothing at all to the Purpose; for
“ the Question is, supposing a Thing to be
“ really, and in itself true, by what Means
“ may we come to know that it is true; and
“ whether Authority may not, in some Cases,
“ be a proper Medium for ascertaining us of
“ the Truth of a Thing, which we could
“ not have known to be true, or not so cer-
“ tainly, but by that Authority or Testimo-
“ ny? This is what this Writer seems to de-
“ ny, and in this he has the *common Sense*
“ of Mankind against him.” But I am sure,
that this Argument could never have been
brought against me with *common Sense*; and
'tis well he said, with Respect to what he
here supposes, that I *seem to deny it*; for I
believe it could have seem'd so to no Body
else. History, no Doubt, by which we are
informed of very remote Facts, may be of
very great Use, though in this we must de-
pend on human Authority, which being fal-
lible, may, in some Cases, deceive us. But
then, we have here a superior and prior Test
of *Truth*, and may take the probable, and
reject the improbable Parts of any antient
Story, where the Historian is not supposed
to have been infallible, or under any uner-
ring Guidance. But when a History is offered,
with

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with which no such Liberty is to be taken, and where there can be no Distinction allow'd between the probable and improbable, this must destroy the End and Use of all History, and instead of being the Means of true Information, it must prove a Source of infinite Error, Contradiction, and Confusion: And for this I may appeal to the History of the whole World, and what must have been the Consequence, had all other Historians been thought infallible, and under an unerring Guidance in all their Writings, as well as the biblical, or *Hebrew* Historians. The real Consequence has been, that Men have been more divided about Religion, than any Thing else, and that the biblical History has afforded more Matter of Dispute and Contention, and has occasioned more Volumes to have been writ, as Expositions and Commentaries, in order to explain it, and reconcile one Part with another, than all the other Books in the World. But this could never have happened, had this sacred History been read critically, and interpreted by the same Rules of natural and rational Probability and Credibility, as we read all other History. No Facts are capable of being rationally proved by Testimony, where the natural Improbability or Incredibility of the Thing outweighs, in a Judgment of Reason, the Credit of the Testifier, and where it is more probable, that the original Vouchers should have been

been mistaken, or some Way or other imposed on, than that their Story, or Sense of the Matter, should be true; or if this should be doubtful, it would be safer and more prudent, especially in any Matter of Consequence, to suspend one's Judgment, than to determine upon it absolutely and positively, without sufficient Evidence.

The same Degree of Evidence that would make a natural Fact probable and credible, would not be sufficient to prove a Miracle, or any Thing out of the common Course, and beyond any of the general known Laws of Nature. In this Case, the Proof or Evidence by Testimony ought to be proportional to the natural and rational Improbability of the Thing; and to yield one's Assent on any other Condition, would not be *rational Belief*, but *weak Credulity*.

If any Man should tell me, that he had lately talked with Dr. *Leland* upon the Subject of the Controversy between him and me, and that they had such and such Discourse, agreeable to what I should have expected on such an Occasion, I should make no Scruple to give him Credit. But if he should tell me, that he had very lately seen Mr. *Locke*, or a Person long since dead, who had assured him, that he was risen again from the Dead, and should within so many Days be translated to Heaven; I should suspend my Judgment, at least, as to the Truth of it, if not absolutely

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lutely reject it, as wild and chimerical: Nay, if five hundred Persons of otherwise the best Credit were to attest this, it could not make it credible. For though the Honesty of the Testifiers might not be doubted or suspected, yet it would be still more probable, that they might have been some Way or other deceiv'd, or impos'd on, than that the Thing itself should be true. I shall not now bring any Thing to this Test that might occasion a farther Dispute between the Author and me; but should he at any Time be closely attack'd upon the Credibility of some of his original and *main Facts*, I question whether he would be well prepared for a rational Defence, or be able to make it appear, that he has the same Evidence here, as he should think sufficient in other Cases of the same Kind.

But as for receiving Things implicitly, and in Trust from Authority, I am sure I have granted as much as he can prove. Truth in Fact must depend on Authority, as to the Proof of it to us; and scientific Truth, whether physical or moral, may be so received, and sometimes to great Advantage. All Scholars, or Disciples, must take the first Elements or Rudiments of Knowledge, in some Measure, from their Masters and Teachers, till they are capable of being let into the Nature and Reason of Things, and see them in their own proper, genuine Evidence. But the Authority itself can never be this Evidence,

dence, or rational Proof. But he who takes Things thus implicitly, and upon bare Authority, without any farther Reason, or any superior Rule of Judgment whereby to distinguish Truth from Falshood, must stand upon very precarious Ground, and may as soon receive Falshood as Truth: Nay, and is much more likely to do so in depending on any human Authority in Matters of Religion, or even any pretended *divine Authority*, which has nothing to support it, or prove it to us, but *human Authority*. And, therefore, had we no more certain Test or Rule of Judgment in this Case prior to Authority, we could never have any rational Security for the Truth of any Religion at all. Let the almost infinite and endless Jars and Disputes about divine Authority, and the Doctrines of Revelation, as contain'd in Scripture, testify this; for I desire or need no other Proof. But as our Author affects all along to be under great Uncertainty about my Meaning, that I talk at least as inconsistently and unintelligibly of *Revelation* as he does, and that if I mean any Thing by the Word, I must mean the same Thing with himself; and since he pretends, that there can be no such Thing as *divine Truth*, *reveal'd Truth*, or *Truth* from God, but by *Inspiration*, or *immediate Revelation* in his authoritative Way; I shall here endeavour, in short, to settle this general Account with him, which will save me the
 Trouble

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Trouble of following him through all his little Shifts, Exceptions, and Cavils, with which, for any Thing I can see, he has fill'd up his Book.

I know but two Ways of coming at Truth. One is by Reasoning from the Nature of Things, and moral Fitness of Actions, in the right Use and Exercise of our natural, rational Faculties. By this Means we come to perceive the natural, necessary Relations of the Agreement or Disagreement of our Ideas. By this Method and Process of Reasoning we arrive at scientific Certainty in Things capable of it, either by an immediate Perception of the Relation of any two Ideas placed in *juxta* Position; which is called *Intuition*: Or by a continued Series or Chain of such Perceptions between any two distant and remote Ideas, by which the Relation of the two Extrems is perceiv'd by the compound Relations, Reasons, or Proportions of the intermediate Ideas; and this is call'd *Demonstration*. But where the Proposition, or Principle in Question, is not thus scientific, and cannot be reduced to Demonstration on one Side or the other, we sum up the Evidence on both Sides in the same Way of natural Relation and Connexion of Ideas; and this being done, the Mind determines itself to this Side or that upon the Balance, as the greater Weight of Evidence may fall; and this is rational Probability. But in this Case, the Strength or Degree of Assent

Assent ought always to be proportional to the Difference or Excess of the Evidence on one Side more than the other; and whatever goes beyond this, is *Enthusiasm, implicit Faith,* and *Assent* given without any Evidence, or Proof at all. For to carry any Degree of Assent beyond the Proof or Prevalency of the Evidence on that Side, is to believe a Thing arbitrarily, and without Proof: This is only to dream that a Thing is true, or to resolve, that it shall be true with one, whether it is really so or not, which is the firm, indubitable Faith or Persuasion of *implicit Believers*.

But there is another very different Way of coming at Truth, which sometimes hits right, though it is always uncertain and precarious; and this is by a firm Reliance upon *Authority*, without any rational, perceiv'd Connexion of Ideas, as appearing to the Understanding. This authoritative Way of communicating and receiving Truth, must be own'd to be of great Use and Benefit to Mankind, while it is kept within its natural Bounds, and confined to the proper, rational Measures and Rules of authoritative Probability. There are a great Number of Truths in all the Parts of Mathematicks, experimental Philosophy, and in every Part and Branch of Knowledge, which the Unlearned or Unskilful in that Way must take upon Trust, and submit to the Judgment of such as are more knowing, and better instructed in that Way. But if

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the learned Professors, Masters, and Teachers of any Art, Science, Mystery, or Faculty, should be infinitely divided, and could never come to any Agreement among themselves, what should the Ignorant and Unlearned think or say of it, but that the Matters they dispute about, are either not necessary at all, or at least not necessary to them, who cannot judge of the Merits of the Cause? This, therefore, is a necessary Rule or Principle of human Prudence, which every Man ought to lay down to himself, and act upon, not to regard or be determined by any Set of Professors or Teachers in any Thing, concerning which they cannot agree among themselves.

Where any Truths or Doctrines are supposed to come immediately from God himself, and to depend on his sole Authority, abstracting from the Nature and Reason of Things, as appearing to the Understanding, this is commonly called *Revelation*. Now our learned theological Professors, Masters, and Teachers of *School Divinity*, seem to be unanimously agreed, that there is such a Thing as *Revelation* in this Sense, Doctrines necessary to be believed, which are above and beyond all Search and Investigation of human Reason, without such a supernatural and super-rational Revelation. But what this Revelation is, or what its peculiar Doctrines and Duties are, they know not; they are infinitely divided about it among themselves, and when

when you call upon, or desire them to fix or settle any Thing certain about it, and in which they will agree, they bear off, and desire to be excused. They are very sure, that there is a Revelation above and beyond all human Reason, and that no human Reason could ever have discovered; but what this Revelation is, or wherein it consists, it seems, has not been yet reveal'd.

Now to apply this: Suppose all the Mathematicians and Astronomers in the World agreed, that there is such a Thing as *true Astronomy*, and that there are certain infallible, astronomical Tables extant, by which the celestial Motions may be determined to the greatest Exactness. But when it comes to the Computation, no Body knows the right Use of them, what the Force and Signification of the Figures and Characters, whether they are to be understood and constructed according to the decimal, duodecimal, or sexagesimal Division, or any other; or whether these Tables suppose the Truth of the *Pythagorean*, the *Copernican*, the *Tychonic*, the *Ptolemaic*, or any other astronomical Scheme or Hypothesis; for it is all equally Hypothesis, and every one is left to chuse for himself this or that, or which he likes best.

This has been always just the Case of supernatural or super-rational *Revelation*. We have the *Antinomian*, the *Calvinistical*, the *Arminian*, the *Arian*, the *Socinian* Revelations:

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We have reveal'd Popery and reveal'd Protestantism, reveal'd Episcopacy and reveal'd Presbytery, and every Thing is *Revelation* that can never be understood or agreed on.

This is our learned Author's *Revelation*, for he does not come to Particulars, or make any Thing certain and determinate of it. He knows he cannot, and dares not do this; and, therefore, endeavours to shift off the Difficulty by *Recrimination*, and pretends, that I have talk'd of Revelation as inconsistently or unintelligibly as he, and that I must agree with him in this Case, if I would be consistent with myself. This is really wonderful, and I believe a Discovery which no Man, but our learned Author could have made. I had constantly, and therefore at least consistently with myself declared, that I take natural, and reveal'd Religion to be essentially and subjectively the very same, and that the only Difference lies in the different Ways or Methods of teaching, conveying, and receiving the *same Truths*. This the whole World about is Witness to, and therefore the Author must not think to escape Judgment by Demurrs, or imagine that he can traverse the Cause much longer.

I say, Truth may be receiv'd either *explicitly* or *implicitly*, from *Reason* or *Authority*. In both these Ways of Communication and Reception, Truth must be very useful, while it is receiv'd and acted upon at all: But in the one Case, a Man takes it *rationally*, and with

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with his Eyes open; and, in the other Case, *believingly*, and with his Eyes shut. In these two different Ways of receiving Truth, a Man either sees and judges for himself, or leaves others to see and judge for him; but here the authorized, commissioned Judges could never agree in any Thing but this, that Men ought never to see and judge for themselves.

To receive the Truths and Doctrines of Religion, as founded in Nature and Reason, and as appearing in their own native, intrinsic Evidence, is what the Bulk of Mankind are not capable of; for God did not make, or design them to be religious and virtuous independent of their spiritual Guides, and authoriz'd Interpreters. The eternal, moral Obligations of Truth and Righteousness, Justice and Charity, Temperance and Sobriety, the filial Love of God, and the brotherly Love of Mankind, are Doctrines not to be understood or practis'd, without Miracles, the Accomplishment of Prophecies, Messages brought down from Heaven by Angels, immediate Revelations, supernatural, sensible Appearances above Nature and Reason; and all this to be receiv'd and rested in upon bare *human Authority*.

But any Man who will but open his Eyes and see, must soon be convinced, that all this is contrived to promote some other Interest besides that of Religion, or any necessary

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Obligations of moral Truth and Righteousness. The inward, spiritual and divine Temper, the filial Love of God, and the brotherly Love of Mankind, with a Life and Practice, and sincere Endeavour conformable to this, could never make a Man a Christian, or true Believer, in this supernatural Way; for notwithstanding all this, a Man might still be abhorr'd and rejected by God, and cursed and excommunicated out of every Christian Church Society: But I like this Scheme the worse, as it seems to me as unnatural and irrational, as it is unfriendly and uncharitable.

That Truth and Justice, Mercy and Charity, Temperance and Sobriety, under the Inspection and Cognizance of the supream Being, as the righteous Governor and Judge of the World, as necessary to the Well-being and Happiness of Mankind throughout the whole Period of their Existence, and, consequently, that this must be necessarily the Will and Law of God to Man, is, I think, as clear and demonstrable as any Proposition in *Euclid*; and this is a Demonstration *a priori*, of the positive Will and Law of God to Man. This, therefore, is the natural and direct Way of teaching Religion, and bringing Men to the true Knowledge of God and themselves; and having such Proof, who would argue much *a posteriori*, take all upon Trust, and lay the main Stress upon Facts, which can
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have no natural or rational Connexion with the Doctrines themselves?

Had the Proof from Miracles and Prophecy been confined to this, and brought in only to strengthen and confirm the moral Obligations of Truth and Righteousness, it might have served a good Purpose, with Regard to the ignorant and unthinking Part of the World, which are, perhaps, the Majority, and no Controversy would ever have arisen about it. This Sort of Evidence was never intended to strengthen and improve Reason and natural Religion, but rather to set it aside, and trump something else upon it; and this Purpose it has really, and in Fact served.

I presume our learned Author would not pretend to say, that *Plato, Cicero, Plutarch*, and the heathen Moralists in general, were *inspired* with their moral Doctrines, or that they had it all from God by *immediate Revelation*. They could not be inspired, or have such Things immediately from God, because they wrought no *Miracles*, and did not pretend to be *Prophets*: And yet I might challenge him to shew, that the Gospel-Morals are not the same with theirs, or that they had not as right Notions of God and Providence, and of moral Truth and Rectitude, as the Happiness of Man; as the Christians themselves. I should be glad to know any one distinguishing Principle between Christian and Heathen Morality, and still gladder to know,

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that we Christians outdo them in any conspicuous or remarkable Virtue.

It is a very gross and vulgar Error to imagine, that the Knowledge and Worship of the true God, and his providential Government of the World, were confined formerly to the *Jews*, or People of *Israel*, or that *Moses* contributed any Thing to the preserving or propagating this Knowledge and Worship among the rest of Mankind. The vulgar Superstition and decry'd Idolatry of the antient *Greeks* and *Romans*, was a mere Piece of State Policy, and an Engine of Civil Government only; and so it was always understood and considered by their Statesmen, Philosophers, and every Man of Sense and liberal Education. It had been antiently established by Custom and Laws, it was thought dangerous to alter it, and the State knew very well how to turn the vulgar Superstition to their own Advantage, and serve the Ends of Government by it; and, therefore, they who knew, and had been taught better, kept their Infidelity as a deep Secret to themselves, since it must have cost them their Lives, and endangered the total Subversion of their Government and Laws, to have revealed or discovered the grand Arcanum to the Populace. But they who think, that right Notions of God and Providence, and the religious Obligations of moral Truth and Righteousness, had been so much lost in the World, are very
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much mistaken; and in Confirmation of this, I would only appeal to the Writings of the heathen Moralists still extant.

To introduce Miracles and Prophecy, therefore, as the proper, genuine Proof of a new Religion, and a new Scheme of Salvation and Acceptance with God, is a mere Blind of Christian Priests, to serve a Turn, and to establish something else as Religion besides moral Truth and Righteousness, or the filial Love of God, and brotherly Love of Mankind. And if the Christian Laity in this Age will not open their Eyes to clear Day-Light, they may be led on in the Dark by their spiritual Guides as long as they please.

I had observ'd, that though God is the Fountain and Original of all Truth, yet moral Truth, or such as concerns our Duty and Happiness, is more strictly call'd *divine Truth*, or Truth coming from God, especially when such Truth had been, in great Measure, lost or obscured, and darkned in the World, and is recovered again, and Men brought to consider and own it, by any particular or extraordinary Dispensation of Providence, in which Persons are raised up, and qualified to teach and publish it, and to press it upon the Hearts and Consciences of Men in its native, intrinsic Evidence. But the Author can allow nothing to be *divine Truth*, or to come from God, unless it is communicated to us by some immediate, supernatural Revelation, in the authoritative

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thoritative Way, or by exprefs Declarations from God, abstracted from the Nature and Reason of the Things themselves, as appearing to the Understanding. I had urged, that 'tis impossible for us to know or judge of Truth, in the Way of bare Authority, or to distinguish it from Falshood, because we can have no certain Evidence, Criterion, or Rule of Judgment in this Case, *a posteriori*, and from Facts only. And I had offered a great deal to shew, that Miracles, how well soever attested, can afford us no such Proof of divine Authority. But the Author, in his second Chapter, resumes this Argument, and undertakes to answer what I had advanced upon it, which I shall now distinctly consider.

I have not denied, but admitted, that God may, if he thinks fit, communicate Truth to the Mind of Man by Inspiration, or immediate Revelation; and this Concession I left him to make the best of. But I have press'd him very much, to know what these Truths are which God has thus communicated to Men, and how we shall know or judge of them, supposing the Revelation not to be made immediately to ourselves. This is now the Question between us, and, indeed, has been the only material Question all along. Could our Author have fix'd, or ascertain'd any of these Truths, which he supposes to have been given originally by Inspiration, or
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immediate Revelation, it might have very much shortned the Controversy; but he was very sensible of the Difficulty of this, and, therefore, found it necessary to keep himself in Generals. He knows very well, how sure such systematical Writers are of a Foil, as soon as they come to Particulars. They have been driven out of one Point of supernatural Revelation after another, till now at length they have scarce any Thing left of this Kind, that they can stand to, and agree in. By this Means, they have made a perfect *Proteus* of Scripture, that may be exhibited under any Figure or Form, according to the Mode or Fashion of this, or the other Sect of Visionaries.

The Author here was so hard press'd, that having nothing else to do with the Miracles, he was forced to bring them as a Proof of *natural Religion*, or an Attestation to the *Gospel Morals*. But surely the Obligations of moral Truth and Righteousness, Justice and Charity, Sobriety and Temperance, that we ought to love God above all, and our Neighbour as ourselves, and to do as we would be done by; these moral Obligations, I say, as founded in Nature and Reason, are much more certain and evident, than any of those Miracles or supernatural Facts, which are now brought as a farther and clear Proof of *Morality* and *natural Justice*. Besides, these moral Truths and Duties are evident to all the rational,

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rational, considerate Part of Mankind, and are a most certain, infallible Revelation from God to Man, by the common Light of Nature and Reason: Whereas those Miracles were wrought but in a little Corner of a small Country, all but one or two having been done in *Galilee* by the Sea-side, about *Capernaum* and *Bethsaida*, and this too among the most superstitious, ignorant Bigots, who were run mad in Expectation of a temporal Kingdom, and who would have set up this Jesus as their Messiah or King. None but such Enthusiasts could receive the Benefit of those healing Miracles; and then it often happened so according to their *Faith*, or in Proportion to the Strength of their Persuasion, and Force of Imagination. And this is often known to be the natural, physical Cause of the most wonderful and sudden Turns and Alterations of the Blood and Humours. But I shall farther consider this Argument from Miracles in its proper Place, where the Author pretends to answer all that I had offered on this Head. The Reader will here only observe, that the Question between the Author and me, is not, whether God may not communicate Truth by immediate Revelation to the Mind of Man, and even such Truth as must otherwise have been above and beyond the Search and Investigation of human Reason: I am not disputing the Possibility of the Thing with him; but the Question

is, whether it has been really so in Fact, and what those supernatural Truths and Doctrines are, which God has thus communicated to us? Let but the Reader attend to this, and he will find all along, that every Thing the Author has offered, is purely evasive, with Respect to the real Question. If he can but prove, that a Thing may be so, he thinks he may from hence fairly conclude, that therefore it is so. He has taken up with an unproved Hypothesis as a Postulatum, and is resolved, it seems, to hold it fast till the contrary can be demonstrated. But such a Writer can deserve but very little Notice, which, doubtless, he would be glad of, since not to answer him at all would be the only Way to make him, with some People, look considerable.

I had deny'd the *natural Communicability* of *supernatural* Truths or Doctrines, which require a *supernatural Illumination* to know, conceive, or judge of them. "But here again, says the Author, he confounds, as he had done in entering upon this Argument, *personal Inspiration or Revelation*, with the Truths, the Doctrines, and Laws, that came originally by Inspiration; and upon this Blunder of his own the Force of his Argument depends," p. 65. But how could I possibly confound the *supernatural Illumination* with the supernatural Truths or Doctrines thereby communicated
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and conceived? How could I thus confound the Faculty with the Object, when I expressly distinguish them, and suppose them to be as different as any other Faculty and Object? What I said, and still say, is this, That a supernatural Truth or Doctrine cannot be the Object of a natural, unassisted Faculty; and this, I think, must be certainly so, unless the Author will say, that his inspired or revealed Truths and Doctrines are *natural* and *supernatural* too. And this is what our Author, and others, who talk in his Way, really suppose and maintain, without seeming to be aware of it. If *St. Paul*, for Instance, had some doctrinal Truths revealed to him, which he could not have known, perceiv'd, or judg'd of, but by a supernatural Illumination, how could he make those supernatural Doctrines the Objects of other Mens natural Understandings, which were not, and could not have been so of his own? Suppose this Apostle, by some supernatural Illumination, had receiv'd certain Truths and Doctrines which were incomprehensible and ineffable to others; all that he can be supposed to do by Miracles, would be only to gain Credit or Belief in this: But no Miracles in the World can make any Thing the Object of a Man's natural Understanding, that was not so before. A Man may come to the Knowledge of many Things which he did not know before, but of nothing that was not before a natural Object of

the human Understanding. I presume it must be allow'd, that no Revelation, Miracles, or any other Method of Communication and Proof can create the Truth, Reasonableness, or Fitness of a Thing, but must always pre-suppose it. A Thing is not, therefore, reasonable or fit, because God commands or requires it, but he therefore commands it, because it was antecedently reasonable and fit. Nothing can be communicated to the Understanding, as rationally and doctrinally true, but what is a natural, adequate Object of human Understandings; and whatever is a natural, adequate Object of the Understanding, Reason may investigate, and the Understanding perceive and judge of; and this I must insist upon, that whatever is naturally *communicable*, is naturally and rationally *discoverable*; and if the Author should think fit to debate this Matter farther, or to insist on the contrary, the least he can do is to give an Instance of it, and shew what one single Truth or Doctrine has been made known to us by Revelation, which must otherwise have been above and beyond all the Search, Investigation, or Judgment of human Reason: But the Gentlemen in his Way of thinking and talking, are always driven to the Absurdity of supposing the same Doctrines of Revelation to be both natural and supernatural, rational and super-rational; natural, adequate
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Objects of the Understanding, and yet not so, but by Revelation and Miracles.

The Reader will observe here, that we are talking all along of *rational, doctrinal Truths*, or such Truths as must appear clear and adequate to *human Reason*, as soon as they come to be proposed, and made the Objects of *human Understanding*. Without attending to this, any Man may be deceiv'd and impos'd on, and run away with a perfectly wrong Notion of the true State of the Controversy. If the Doctrines of supernatural Revelation are in themselves rational and adequate Objects of human Understanding, and if when once proposed, they may be known and judg'd of by *human Reason*, without any *supernatural Illumination*; this, I think, is a Demonstration, that such Truths and Doctrines are still the natural, adequate Objects of human Understanding, and therefore discoverable by human Reason, when once freed from that general Prejudice, Blindness, and Darkness, which evil Custom, bad Example, and the Craft and Policy, and carnal Interest of Impostors had introduced; or, which is the same Thing, what is now called *supernatural Revelation*, is nothing but natural Reason delivered from its induced Blindness, Prepossessions and Prejudices, and restored to its natural, right Use and Exercise, with Respect to doctrinal and practical Morals; or, that *reveal'd Religion* is *natural Religion* restored

stored and revived. This is what I have maintained, and all that I insist on; but this Author and others, who would be thought the great Patrons of Christianity and true Religion, as founded upon *Authority*, abstracted from the Nature and Reason of Things, or moral Fitness of Actions, as appearing to the Understanding, would persuade us, that there are some necessary Truths and Doctrines of Religion, which must have been absolutely above and beyond the Search and Investigation of *all human Reason*, without a *supernatural Revelation*, to be demonstrated and made known by Miracles, Prophecies, and such supernatural Facts, as the Proofs of *immediate, divine Authority*. But the Merits of this Cause, and the Sum of what has been hitherto said on both Sides, will be distinctly considered and debated in the next Chapter.

C H A P. II.

THE Author, in his second Chapter, p. 71, comes to the grand Argument of all, the Argument from Miracles, as a Proof of *Revelation* above *Reason*. This has been very much laboured by the Gentlemen in the authoritative Scheme, and the Author here would be thought to give a clear
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and full Answer to all that I had offered upon this Head. He begins by reciting what he had offered in his first Volume, in order to settle and ascertain the true Nature and Notion of Miracles, and he tells us, that they must be,

1st. *Works of such a Nature, as manifestly and undeniably transcend all the Power and Skill of any Man, or all the Men upon Earth; and, therefore, evidently argue a supernatural Interposition.*

2dly. *They must be such amazing and extraordinary Acts of Power and Dominion, as naturally, and almost unavoidably, lead us to consider and regard them, as proceeding from the supreme Lord and Governor of the World.*

3dly. *There must be a Succession and Concurrence of many such extraordinary Acts of Power and Dominion, and that for a Series of Years together, all manifestly tending to the same End. For if such Things were done merely in a single Instance or two, let the Fact be ever so extraordinary, and above all the Power of Man, yet it might be suspected, that it was only some strange Thing that had happened, from which nothing could be certainly concluded.*

4thly. *They must be all plainly wrought in Attestation and Evidence of the divine Mission of the Person by whom, or in Favour of whom they are wrought, and in Confirmation of the Scheme of Doctrines and Laws, by him publish'd to the World, in the Name of God.*

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5thly. *They must be such Miracles, or extraordinary Acts of Power, as never have been controlled or over-ruled by any superior Miracles, or contrary Evidence.*

I have here given the Author's whole Evidence of Miracles, as the Proof of supernatural Doctrines: But I had largely shewn, in my second Volume in Answer to his first, that in every one of these Instances, which he makes his Characteristicks of true Miracles, we are not only liable to, but in great and imminent Danger of *Deception*, either by ascribing very unusual and extraordinary *natural Effects* to *supernatural Causes*; or by supposing and presuming Things to have been done in Fact, which really were not. I had largely prov'd, that Mankind, from the very Beginning, had been grossly deceived and abused, either by taking up with false Facts, or by ascribing Things to wrong Causes, and that no Scheme of Imposture, Superstition, and false Religion ever did take Place, or ever could have succeeded, without pretending to such Sort of *supernatural Evidence*. Now in Answer to all this, it might be expected, that the Author should have proved, that however all the rest of Mankind may have been deceived and imposed on themselves, by false, mistaken Facts, and wrong Causes, it is incredible, that the *Jews* and first Christians ever should; and that tho' Imposture on the one Hand, and Enthusiasm on the other, have run thro'

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the World, from the Beginning to this Day, yet it cannot be supposed, that either of these should be concerned in the Case before us. However, I shall not dwell upon the Author, who has not done it, or dared not attempt it; but fairly consider what he has said.

I had observ'd, that we have no certain Test, or Rule of Judgment, whereby to distinguish between a true Miracle, and a false one, or between a Thing of this Nature that is really done, or done only in Appearance; and that there is nothing in which Mankind have been more generally deceived, and imposed on, than in such supposed supernatural Facts. But says the Author, *p.* 75. " This is a very general Way of talking, " and if it were good for any Thing, might " be brought to prove, that because Persons " have been sometimes deceived and imposed " upon in Facts, therefore no Man can ever " depend upon the Testimony of his Senses " in any Case whatsoever; though our Au- " thor himself elsewhere speaks of the Testi- " mony of our Senses, as so certain, that they " leave no Room to doubt of any Decep- " tion." But the Author here mistakes, or wilfully overlooks the whole Strength and Force of the Argument; for I say, the Testimony of Sense is much more certain, and may be more securely depended on, with Regard to *natural*, than *supernatural* Facts. There are very few, if any, supernatural Facts,

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Facts, how strongly soever attested by Sense, that have held good upon a stricter Enquiry; and so far as we can judge, by any Observation and Experience, we must conclude, that the Case has been always so, and that Men are more liable to be imposed on, and more apt to impose on themselves, with Respect to supernatural than natural Facts; and that therefore the Testimony of Sense is not, and cannot be so credible in one Case, as in the other; and therefore, if our Author would judge, either by Reason or Experience, from the present, or all past Ages, he must be more incredulous, and stand more upon his Guard, even against the Report of the Senses, with Respect to supernatural Facts, than such as are common, ordinary, and natural.

I observ'd farther, that we have no Test or Rule of human Judgment, whereby to know what is, or what is not a Miracle, supposing a Thing to be really done, and that there is no Deception in the Case, with Regard to the Fact itself, because we know not the utmost Power of natural Agents, or Extent of natural Causes: And, therefore, how uncommon and extraordinary soever a Thing may appear, there may be nothing miraculous or supernatural in it; but in Opposition to this, the Author asserts, *p.* 76. That we may so far know the utmost Power of natural Agents, or Extent of natural Causes, as with Certainty to pronounce, that some Things

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which are really done in Fact, exceed the Power of all *natural, material Causes*, and must assure us of the immediate Interposition of God himself; and he instances in *raising the Dead*, or restoring, in an Instant, a disabled Limb, which had quite lost its Use, That these Things, supposing the Truth of the Facts, would be very extraordinary, must be granted; but that they exceed the Power of all natural Agency, or Extent of natural Causes, he has not proved, nor is he able to prove it. As to his farther Observation, p. 77. that God, *consistently with his infinite Wisdom and Goodness, and the Glory of his unequalled Majesty and Dominion*, can never suffer such Things to be done *in Attestation of an Imposture, or to promote the Interests of Vice, Falshood, and Superstition*; I agree with him, that God cannot suffer such Things to be done either in *Reality*, or *Appearance*, with an Intention to promote Imposture, Vice, Superstition, and false Religion. I here presume, that if God suffers Men to be imposed on, by false and counterfeit Miracles, in Confirmation of a false Religion, and these Appearances are such, that the Spectators or Persons concerned are not able to discover the Imposture, or detect the Cheat; this is the same Thing with Respect to their Belief and Practice, and must have the same Effect upon them, as if those Miracles were really wrought; and that God always has suffered the Bulk of

Mankind

Mankind to be thus abused and cheated, and still does suffer it through the greatest Part of *Christendom*, is evident in Fact, and to all Experience. Now what must we do in this Case? Must we boldly impeach the Wisdom and Goodness of God, and say he does not act agreeably *to the Glory of his unequalled Majesty and Dominion*? Or must we own, that Miracles, or which is the same Thing, such Appearances of them as cannot be detected by the Persons concerned, are no Test or Rule of Truth, and, consequently, that if Men, who rely upon any such Proof, should be led into Error, Superstition, and false Religion, they cannot blame God for it? It is as evident as Light can make it, that this Pretence of Miracles and supernatural, sensible Appearances, as a Proof of Truth, and Test of divine Authority, and Mens relying upon such Proof, has been the Ground of all the Imposture, Enthusiasm, Superstition, and false Religion in the World. And when Men quitting the plain Principles of Nature and Reason, will fly to Authority and supernatural Facts, for a Religion above Reason, they must not charge the Almighty with the Errors and Delusions they may be thus led into, and kept under: But, perhaps, this Writer may live to repent of his Rashness, in laying such Stress upon a Method of Truth, or Sort of Evidence, which he will never be able to support.

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To my observing, that where the Facts are not the immediate Objects of the Senses, the Credibility or Degree of Evidence must be still lessened, the greater the Distance is from the Fountain, and the more Hands the Story passes thro' in the Conveyance; because there will be the more Danger of intermediate Additions, Alterations, and Misrepresentations of the original Story: The learned Author, without denying this, thinks fit *to lay down a Position in Opposition to it*. His Position is this, as to the whole Sense of it, That *there may be* such historical Credibility, and Proof of the original Facts, as to leave no reasonable Ground of doubting to us at the greatest Distance of Time. I am not disputing with him of what *may be*, or of what is barely *possible*. And as he has here offered nothing to prove the *Probability* of it, I shall let this *opposite Position* pass; only the Reader may observe, that this Writer continually keeps himself within the reasonable Bounds of *Possibilities* and May-be's.

I had farther observ'd, that as human Testimony must be always fallible, so, with Regard to supernatural Facts, such as Miracles, Prodigies, Ghosts, Apparitions, and Things in themselves improbable, it has the least and very lowest Degree of Credibility; and, therefore, that the Evidence or Proof in this Case ought to be so much the stronger and incontestable, in Proportion to the natural Improbability,

probability, or Incredibility of the Thing. To this he replies, "That a Thing's being extraordinary and miraculous, is no Objection against the Credibility of it, if at the same Time it be of such a Nature, and so circumstanced, that the Persons who were Witnesses to it, might have as full Assurance of the Certainty and Reality of it, as any Man can *possibly have of any Facts* whatsoever." 'Tis well he introduces this with an *if*, and then roundly and absolutely asserts it to be so, for otherwise one might have expected the Proof. But since this Writer thinks himself concerned to prove nothing, perhaps I may oblige him before we have done, by proving the contrary, and that what he here asserts is not really so; and this I hope will be *ex abundanti*.

I had observed, lastly, on this Argument of Miracles, that it is highly improbable, and not to be admitted, that God should work Miracles, or interpose by an immediate, divine Power, out of the Way of natural Agency, but to answer some great End of vast Importance to Mankind; and, therefore, he would not work Miracles either to prove Things which were plainly and necessarily true in Nature and Reason before, nor Things in their own Nature indifferent, and such as can serve no good Use or Purpose, when they are known and put in Practice. Now here the Author grants, *p. 30*, that such a
divine

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divine Interposition by Miracles must be to answer some great and valuable End; and he thinks one important End and Design of it was, to prove the Truth and Certainty of *natural Religion*, i. e. to prove the Truth and Certainty of what was sufficiently clear and evident in Nature and Reason before, and which we find the Heathen Moralists understood as well as the Apostles themselves, which the Miracles could make never the clearer. But another great, important End and Use of the Miracles our Author imagines to have been, to prove certain very great and important Truths or Doctrines, which could never have been known or discovered by any Use of Reason; but what these Doctrines are, we are yet to seek; and so I fear we are like to be, for any farther Light this Author will give us.

I had argued, that even Inspiration itself, which was the Ground and Reason of Miracles, could be no Test of Truth and sound Doctrine; because Men were obliged to try the Spirits, to bring the Doctrines themselves to the Test of Reason and sound Judgment, and to consider their Nature and Tendency, thereby to know whether they came from the Spirit of Truth and Righteousness, or of Error and Delusion.

To this the Author thus replies, *p.* 83.
 “ So far as I can understand the Force of
 “ this Argument, it runs thus; that because
 “ all

“ all Doctrines are to be brought to the Test
 “ and Judgment of Reason, so far, that no
 “ Doctrines must be admitted, that are evi-
 “ dently contrary to the Principles of sound
 “ Reason, and subversive of Morality, and
 “ the eternal Rules of Righteousness; there-
 “ fore neither Inspiration nor Miracles can
 “ be depended on as any Proof of Doctrines
 “ at all; nor is any more Regard to be had
 “ to what comes this Way, and is thus at-
 “ tested, than if it had come in the ordinary
 “ Way.” This was shrewdly guess’d by the
 learned Author; he has hit upon the very
 Thing that I aim’d at, and which the Argu-
 ment demonstratively proves. For if every
 Thing of this extraordinary Kind was to be
 brought to the Test of Reason and *sound*
Judgment, it could not itself be any Test or
 Rule of *Judgment*. *But this, saith he, is a*
very strange Way of Reasoning; nor is it easy
to discern the Connexion of the Conclusion with
the Premises. I cannot help the *Strangeness*
 of it to this Author, but I am pretty sure,
 that it is no *stranger* than true. But he goes
 on to suppose certain Doctrines, which are ab-
 solutely above and beyond all Search or Dis-
 covery of Reason, but appear perfectly just,
 reasonable, and fit, when discovered by Re-
 velation or Inspiration; and then asks, whe-
 ther Miracles may not be a sufficient Attestation
 and Proof of these? I answer, No. The
 Doctrines are not therefore true, because they
 were

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were given by Inspiration, or because Miracles had been wrought to attest them; but because they appear true by their natural, rational Evidence, when they come to be proposed to the Understanding. For whether a Man receives Truth by Inspiration, or in the common, natural Way, this cannot alter the Rule of Judgment concerning Truth, which must be always the rational Evidence of the Thing, as appearing to the Understanding. For Inspiration itself can be no Rule of Truth, and if a Man may be as well inspired with Falseness as Truth, 'tis evident, that no Miracles wrought in Confirmation of it can be any such Rule; and if a Man might not be inspired with Falseness as well as Truth, and by the Spirit of Error and Delusion as well as by the Spirit of Truth and Righteousness, there could be no Need of trying the Spirits by the rational Rule of Truth, which we are commanded to do. And this, I think, makes it evident even to a Demonstration, that neither Inspiration, nor Miracles, can be any Rule of Truth, and depending on them as such has been always the great Source and Fountain of Error and Delusion. Here 'tis like the Author would cry out in his usual Way, that it is absolutely inconsistent with the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to suffer Mankind to be thus deluded. But how is God obliged, by his Wisdom or Goodness, to preserve Mankind from Imposture and Enthusiasm?

thusiasm? If they will quit and forsake the natural, rational Rule of Truth, and seek out for other Rules, which can be no Rules at all, and which were never given or intended as such, they must take the Consequences of it.

The Author having thus clearly acquitted himself as to the general Argument of Miracles, comes in his third Chapter to *vindicate*, as he calls it, the Miracles of *Moses*, and of Christ and the Apostles, as sufficient Proofs and Attestations of the Truth of the Doctrines. I think I had clearly, and almost demonstratively proved before, that no Inspiration, no Miracles, how great soever the Power may appear to common Apprehensions, can be any Rule or Criterion of Truth at all.

I had argued against the divine Commission and Authority of *Moses*, that the *Egyptian* Sorcerers exhibited as great Acts and Instances of Power as he, and that for any Thing that appears from the *Hebrew* Historians, the Miracles of the *Egyptian* Sorcerers were as real as those of *Moses*. The Magicians of *Egypt*, by their magic Art, could turn their Wands into a Serpent, and then convert that Serpent into a Rod again. They could create and annihilate a living Creature; and nothing beyond this is recorded of *Moses*. This I thought sufficient to prove, that the Miracles of *Moses* and the Sorcerers were either both real, or both equally magical, artificial,

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ficial, and counterfeit; especially as they both acted alike by their magical Wands, and the Contest was only whose Wand had most Power and Virtue. And what gives one the stronger Suspicion of Confederacy in this Case is, that *Moses* could never work any of these Wonders alone, or without the Presence and Assistance of *Aaron*; for when *Moses* gave the Word of Command, *Aaron* still was to stretch out the Rod, or wave the Wand, and then the Thing was done by a *hocus-pocus* Legerdemain. And, perhaps, one Reason why the *Egyptian* Sorcerers could not create Lice, might be, because they had none about them, and the *Israelites* were better stock'd; for according to all Antiquity, Leprosy, Scabs, and Lice, were some of the Plagues with which these Shepherds, before their Expulsion, had infested the *Egyptians*. But 'tis, I think, very plain, that this People had not less Faith than the Believers of Transubstantiation now. If *Moses* had told them, that Dust was Lice, and that all the Dust of *Egypt* was turned to Lice, though it might still look like Dust, and had assured them of this in the Name, and by the Command of the Lord, they must have believ'd it. But no Testimony in the World can make such a Story credible, because the natural Improbability of Things must always outweigh the Credit of any Testimony; especially when the Stories are told by Men, who knew no-
thing

thing of Nature and common Providence, but ascribed every Thing that happened to them, to Miracles, immediate Interposition, and supernatural Causes. But because the *Hebrew* Historian has affirmed it, our Author would say, that the *Israelites* and *Egyptians* too were as sure that all the Dust throughout the Land had been turned into Lice, as any Man can be of any common, sensible Fact. But in the mean while, 'tis very hard, that they who cannot believe this, and many other Things equally credible, must be *branded as Infidels*. However, as to this Author's *Arguments*, I am in no Pain at all, but should not care to be exposed to his *Charity*. I have said so much already in the Introduction, or Preliminary Discourse, of the *Israelites*, or *Hebrew* Shepherds in *Egypt*, that I may here pass over the more slightly our Author's Evasions and Blinds upon the Story; and yet some Notice must be taken of it, lest it might be thought of greater Weight than it really is.

With Regard to the Miracles in *Egypt*, the Author owns, *p.* 89, that what is said to have been done by the Sorcerers, must exceed any human, or created Power; but then he is *persuaded, that they did these Things only in Appearance*. And why then might not the Miracles of *Moses* be done only in Appearance? The Historian makes no Difference here between Reality and Appearance in one Case
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and the other; but on the contrary asserts, that the Sorcerers did such and such Things as well as *Moses*. But, says our Author, p. 91. *The amazing Succession of Wonders that followed, put it beyond all reasonable Doubt, that his Miracles were real and incomparably grand, exceeding the Power of any Creature.* But was it not *incomparably grand*, and exceeding the Power of *any Creature*, to create and annihilate a Serpent, to turn all the Water of the *Nile* into Blood, and to bring vast Shoals of Frogs out of the River at a Word of Command? But supposing it all alike done only in Appearance, *Moses* might be more skilful, or better assisted, than the other Sorcerers, and be able to go farther, and outdo them in their own Way. *Moses*, we know, was skill'd in all the Wisdom and Learning of *Egypt*, and by living forty Years a prime Favourite at Court, as the reputed Son of *Pharaoh's* Daughter, he must have had Opportunities and Advantages of acquiring a greater Skill and Dexterity in their natural Magic and occult Philosophy, than any of the common Sorcerers. But after all, that *Moses* wrought more and greater Wonders than the *Egyptian* Magicians, we must depend upon the sole Credit of the *Hebrew* Historian, who is visibly partial on his own Side. But all the Remains of profane History relating to the most antient Shepherds in *Egypt*, represent this Matter quite otherwise, as we have seen already.

already. And by the *Hebrew* Author's own Account, *Pharaoh* and his Ministers were not convinced to the very last, that *Moses* and *Aaron* had any divine Authority, or Commission from God, to lead the People safe, with all their Substance, out of *Egypt*. The *Hebrew* Managers had been peremptorily forbid the King's Sight and Presence, and bid look to themselves, for *Evil was before them*. The Destruction of the People had been now vow'd and resolv'd upon, and had they not all stole off by Night, and made a sudden, unexpected Flight to the *Red Sea*, they must have been all put to the Sword the next Day.

But after all this Show and Blaze of Miracles and Prodigies in the *Hebrew* Historian, perhaps there might be nothing extraordinary or supernatural in it. The Plagues here mentioned were common enough in *Egypt*, and they are often subject to much the same Calamities to this Day. Contagious Diseases upon Man and Beast, the Over-running the Country with Vermin, and the Destruction of the Corn and Fruits of the Earth, tho' from natural Causes, might give the *Israelites* an Opportunity of escaping, when the *Egyptians* had otherwise got them in their Power, and would have cut them all off. And such an extraordinary Providence and Concourse of Calamities in *Egypt*, would afford the *Hebrew* Historian a sufficient Occasion to re-

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present it all as miraculous. 'Tis evident, that these Historians, all down, are very apt to ascribe the most natural Events to supernatural Causes. They affect to relate nothing but Miracles in Favour of their own Nation, as if that People had been all along the peculiar Care and Favourites of Heaven: And yet the whole Story, from first to last, in their own Account of it, proves the contrary; for there never was a more unhappy People than they, or any Nation less favoured by God and Providence.

To my asking, to what good End or Purpose were these Miracles intended, since they were commonly wrought not for the Good, but Destruction of Mankind? The Author replies, "That the great End of *Moses's* Miracles was plainly this, to give Attestation to a most excellent Law and Constitution, established for the most wise and valuable Purposes, as *I shewed*, says he, *largely in my former Book*, p. 94." But I think I have fully and unanswerably shew'd the contrary, and prov'd that this was a blinding, enslaving, tyrannical Constitution, with Regard especially to its Sacrifices and Priesthood, founded upon the same Principles of human bad Policy with the Laws and Priesthood of *Egypt*; and any Thing that this Author may farther offer in Defence of what he had so *largely shewed* in his former Book, I shall consider in its Place. I think I have clearly

clearly proved in general, that there can be no Connexion at all between *Power* and *Truth*, and that Miracles and Inspiration, alone considered, cannot prove or attest the Truth of any Doctrines. The Design of the Miracles in *Egypt*, as represented by the *Hebrew* Historian himself, was to convince *Pharaoh* and his Servants or Ministers, that *Moses* had a Commission and Authority from God, to lead the *Israelites* peaceably and unmolested out of the Land, with all their Goods and Substance; and to convince the People, that he had the same divine Commission and Authority to conduct them safe to, and settle them peaceably in the Land of *Canaan*, which God had promised and sworn to their Fathers four hundred Years before; and that the Time settled for the Accomplishment of this Promise, Prophecy, and Oath, being now come, it was then to be made good: But neither of these Intentions, with Respect either to the *Egyptians* or *Israelites*, were at all answered, or obtained by these Miracles, and therefore God could never have had any such End or View in them, though *Moses* certainly had. And the remarkable Defeat of this Politician in all his Measures afterwards, plainly shews, that he either mistook his Commission, or gave a wrong Account of it.

I had represented the bloody Conquest of *Canaan*, as projected by *Moses*, and afterward

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executed by *Joshua*, as inconsistent with the Perfections of God, and a most outrageous Violation of the Law of Nature. But our Author, it seems, having fully considered this Objection before, in his Answer to *Christianity as old as the Creation*, does not think fit to say much to it here; but he tells me, p. 97. "That in order to make good my Argument, I must fairly prove, that it is inconsistent with the Idea of God, consider'd as the wise and righteous Governor of the World, to punish a guilty Nation, even to utter Destruction, for their execrable Wickedness; or, that if it be just in him to do so, he cannot commission another Nation to be the Executioners of his just Sentence against them; or, that in this Case they ought not to execute such Commissions; and that this alone will be sufficient to prove, that a Dispensation was not from God, which was confirmed by such illustrious Miracles, bearing all the Characters of a divine Interposition, and the Laws of which were holy, just, and pure, and of an excellent Tendency." This Writer has an excellent Knack at taking every Thing for granted, even where the contrary had been proved to him by Arguments, which he is not able to answer. I think I have proved, that *Moses* had no such divine Commission, that God had never promised and sworn what he pretends and trumps up to serve a Turn, and

and that therefore the Whole must have been a Forgery, and a mere Pretence for invading the Rights and Properties of others, and sacrificing their Lives, in the most cruel Manner, to the ambitious Avarice and Bloodthirstiness of their Conquerors. When *Joshua* had conquered the inland, mountainous Parts of the Country, by butchering and murdering the Inhabitants and lawful Possessors, he divided the whole Land by Lot, from the River *Jordan* to the *Mediterranean*, East and West, and from *Zidon* to the River of *Egypt*, North and South; all which, it seems, God had promised and sworn to *Abraham*, though they were never in Possession of much more than one Half of it. *Joshua* here gave away what was none of his own, and what could never be got, and which therefore certainly God had never given. The Author likewise here asserts, and gives us his Word for it, that this Law was holy, just, and pure, and had an excellent Tendency: He must here include the ritual, ceremonial, or *Levitical* Law, or the Law relating to their Sacrifices and Priesthood; and yet he is not able to shew any one good End or Purpose that this Law ever served, or could serve.

This, I think, may be sufficient to shew, that there was no such divine Commission and Authority in Fact. But to come home to his main Point: I say, that the very *Supposition* of such a Commission, for such a Conquest,

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quest, is absurd, inconsistent, and contray to Nature and Reason.

It is one Thing to ask, what God may do by natural Causes, and in a Way of *absolute Sovereignty*; and another, what he may do by free, accountable Agents, in the Way of *moral Government*. As the absolute Sovereign and Proprietor of the World, no doubt but God may destroy a whole Nation at once by Fire, Water, Plague, Sword, or Famine, even though they were not apparently more *execrably wicked* than other Nations; as the *Canaanites* could not be wickeder than the *Israelites* themselves. But with Regard to moral, free Agents, it cannot be doubted, but God will always govern them by the Law of natural Equity and Justice, and upon the Rules and Principles of moral Rectitude. Had God intended to have destroy'd the *Canaanites* for their *execrable Wickedness*, no doubt but he would have cut them off all together that had been equally guilty, and not have shewn such Partiality and Respect of Persons, as only to have destroy'd the Sinners upon the Mountains, and spared those in the Valleys. Besides, had God intended to have destroyed and rooted out the Inhabitants of *Palestine* for their Sins, when they had been ripe for such Vengeance, he would never have employed Instruments not equal to the Work, or obliged the *Israelites*, by a divine Commission and Authority, to make good a Promise and Oath

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Oath to *Abraham*, which he had not enabled them to execute. But the great Absurdity is, that upon this Supposition, God must have acted inconsistently with himself, and have given contradictory and repugnant Laws. I take the Right of Self-Defence to be a clear and unexceptionable Law of Nature, which God has given to all Mankind, and impress'd so strongly upon them, that they cannot resist it, where Life itself is desirable, or eligible. But it is here supposed, that God gave a positive Law to the *Israelites*, authorizing them to destroy all the *Canaanites*, from the oldest Man to the sucking Child, and at the same Time continued the *Canaanites* under the natural, necessary Law and Right of Self-Defence. But had God given any such positive Law and Authority to the *Israelites*, no doubt but he would have let the People of *Palestine* know it, and in some authentic Way or other assured them, that he had given away their Country to Strangers and Foreigners; and that if they did not leave the Land, and give up all their natural, lawful Possessions, Rights, and Properties peaceably, and without Opposition, they must be all cut to Pieces, Men, Women, and Children. This would have saved a vast Effusion of innocent Blood (for I suppose the Infants were innocent) and would have been perfectly agreeable to the Wisdom and Goodness of God. But the Author's Supposition destroys all Na-

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ture and Reason, sets the Almighty at Variance with himself, and makes him act the most inconsistent Part in the World, by establishing contrary Laws without sufficiently promulging them to the Parties concerned. I can hardly help pitying the Author, to find him under a Necessity of maintaining such Absurdities. But he is, it seems, the chosen, deputed Champion of the Cause, and had rather, perhaps, give up every Thing else, than his imaginary Infallibility of these ancient *Hebrew* Writings.

I had urged, that the Miracles of *Moses*, supposing them real, could answer no good End; because the moral Law was sufficiently known before, and depended on a much superior Evidence, adequate to the Understandings of all Mankind; and the ceremonial Law was such a blinding, enslaving Constitution and State of Things, as to be incapable of any Proof. In Answer to this, the Author, *p.* 106. thus argues, That as the several Nations of the Earth, at this Time, were fallen into the grossest Idolatry and moral Wickedness, it could not surely be inconsistent with the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to bring them out of it, and restore them to the true Religion, by such an extraordinary Dispensation as this. This is the whole Sense and Force of what he offers, and to quote it particularly and *verbatim* here would be too tedious, as it contains nothing but Harangue
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instead of Argument. But the great Weakness and Invalidity of what he here offers, is evident from hence, that this healing, remedying Law was never given to those several Nations who had fallen into Idolatry, and who had lost the true Knowledge and Worship of God. It was given only to one small, particular Nation in a little Corner of the Earth: This Nation were obliged, by their fundamental Law and Constitution, to maintain no Friendship, Intercourse, or Communication with any other Nation; and, therefore, surely, they could never spread or propagate the true Religion, or the right Knowledge and Worship of God among them. And as to that particular Nation to whom it was given, it never answered the End of keeping them from Idolatry, or making them better or wiser than they were before; and, therefore, surely, God could have no such Purpose or Intention in it. And as to the ceremonial Law relating to their Sacrifices, Priesthood, and Methods of expiating Sin, and atoning the Deity, I had said a great deal to prove it a low, abject, blinding, and tyrannical Constitution and State of Things, unworthy of God, and perfectly inconsistent with that inward, spiritual Worship, which he can only accept and reward. But the Author, I presume, does not think himself concerned to answer this, because he says nothing to it but
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what is so perfectly trifling and evasive, that I shall not trouble the Reader with it.

The Author comes next, *p.* 107. to consider what I had said concerning the Miracles of Jesus Christ; and here it may be proper to premise two or three Things, to shorten the Argument, and avoid greater Prolixity in considering the Author's particular Exceptions to what I had offered.

1st, then, It may be observ'd, that Christ's Commission, while he was living and acting in the Flesh, extended only to the *Jewish* Nation, and beyond this he was not to exercise his Ministry, either by himself or Disciples. Thus when Jesus chose the twelve and the seventy, and sent them out to preach and teach among the *Jews*, it was with a particular Injunction not to go among the *Gentiles*, or Proselytes of the Gate; nor to enter into any of the Cities of the *Samaritans*; but to preach Repentance for the Remission of Sins in his Name to the *Jews* only, and declare, that *he was sent to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel*. Accordingly we find the Ministry of Christ and the Apostles confined intirely to the three Provinces of *Palestine*, *Judea*, *Samaria*, and *Galilee*, where the *Jerusalem Hebrew* was understood and spoken. And though there were two large Countries, one to the North, and the other to the South, the Inhabitants of which had been circumcised, and conformed themselves

to the whole Law of *Moses*; yet we never find Christ or any of his Apostles preaching or teaching among them, because the same Language, the *Jerusalem Hebrew*, was not understood or spoken by them: But one of them, the *Itureans*, spoke the *Syriac*, and the *Idumeans Arabic*. And as the Disciples had been born and bred in *Galilee*, the poorest Part of the Country, and in the lowest Way of Life, it cannot be supposed, that they should understand any other Language, or that they should be able to read or write in their own Tongue. Thus when *Peter* and *John*, the two chief and leading Apostles, came to preach Jesus, as arisen from the Dead, the Priests and Rulers were astonished at their *Boldness*, that they should dare openly charge the whole Nation with having murdered their *King*, or *Messiah*, and that there could be no possible Salvation or Deliverance for them, but by believing in this Jesus, and owning him as the Christ, or *King of Israel*. And their Boldness in this was the more remarkable, as these Men were known to be ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται, perfectly ignorant, illiterate Rusticks, or Men who had no Knowledge of Letters. Now all this was plainly a national Quarrel about the Messiah or King, Restorer or Deliverer of *Israel*, and in which no other Nation could hitherto be concerned. I do not here say, that this great Prophet had no farther Design or View than
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to this Nation only; but this, I say, that while he lived he opened his Commission no farther, and his Disciples never understood him otherwise.

2dly. It may therefore be farther observed, that Christ's own Apostles and Disciples grossly misunderstood and misapply'd all that he spoke to them in Parables and Allegories, about the Nature and Extent of his Kingdom, and Design of his Mission. What he intended of a spiritual Kingdom, and the Deliverance of Mankind in general from the Power and Captivity of Sin and Satan, they understood of a temporal Kingdom to be set up and established at *Jerusalem*, under his own Administration, and of the Deliverance of that Nation from their Captivity to the *Romans*. And this Mistake and Delusion they continued in, even after they had received the Holy Ghost, that was to lead them into *all Truth*; and when they came to believe him risen from the Dead, and preached him as such, it was as the *Jewish* Messiah, the Christ, King, and Saviour of *Israel*; and they expected his second Coming very speedily, to set up his Kingdom, and that they should live and reign with him in that very Generation, and before the Decease of some who were then living. This is so very plain in all the Gospels, that it would be but wasting Time, and abusing the Reader's Patience, to quote the particular Passages for it. From this gross Mistake of
theirs,

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theirs, the Disciples, or Evangelists themselves, represent Jesus as acting an inconsistent Part, and talking of himself in a prevaricating Way. Sometimes they represent him as owning himself as the Messiah, or as that Prince and national Deliverer who was to restore the Kingdom, according to the Prophets; and at other Times, they make him disclaim and disown any such Character and Pretension. He sharply rebuked the Devil, whom he cast out, for declaring him as the Messiah, or *King of Israel*; and he strictly charged all the Diseased, the Blind, Sick and Lame, whom he cured, and who were restored by the Power and Virtue of this Faith in him, not to speak of, or mention him under his Name and Character; and did all he could to prevent the Spreading of such a Notion and Report of him. The Truth of the Matter, therefore, seems to be this, that our Saviour all along, from first to last, disclaim'd the Messiahship among them. But his own Disciples and Followers could never be convinced to the contrary, but that he must be the Person. They thought, that he might not yet find it seasonable, or a proper Time, to declare for the Messiahship openly; but they did not doubt but Things would soon take another Turn; and, therefore, when he had been actually crucified, his Disciples absolutely gave up all Hope in him, or farther Expectations from him. We hoped *this was*
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the Man who should have saved Israel; but now their Hopes were all dash'd, and the Thing was come to nothing. And is it credible then, that Jesus should, while he lived, have plainly and expressly told them, that he must be crucified, and should rise again from the Dead on the third Day? Could they be so perfectly stupid or forgetful, as to have no Hope or Expectation at all from such plain and repeated Declarations of his? Nay, could this Thing be so openly and publicly known to the whole Nation, that the *Jewish* Priests and Rulers went to the Governor to demand a Guard to be set over the Sepulchre, to prevent any Imposition or Cheat of this Kind, and yet not so much as suspected by his own Disciples, who looked upon the first Report of it as *an idle Tale*? Nay, 'tis very plain, that the Disciples themselves were not convinced of the certain indubitable Truth of the Fact, from any Thing they had seen or heard of for forty Days together. Jesus always appeared to them in Disguise, and never twice in the same Likeness, or as the same Person they had seen before; when they had seen and talked with him once or twice, they never knew him again by Sight; at his first Appearance they were always frightned, and thought they had *seen a Spirit*, and never suspected it to be him till he was just vanishing, or till they had thought farther, and reflected on the Matter, and then

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then they concluded, that it must have been such a Person. The Disciples, therefore, in this Case, were not as certain *as any Man can be of any sensible Facts*, which is what our Author still insists on, and glories in, whenever he is talking of Miracles and supernatural Facts. But 'tis very plain, that the Disciples were not thoroughly convinced of the Truth and Certainty of the Fact for the first fifty Days after the Resurrection, nor did they ever preach, publish, or declare Jesus to be risen from the Dead, till the Conviction they receiv'd by the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon about one hundred and twenty of them at *Pentecost*. But having taken Notice of this, and what Sort of Evidence it was, already, I shall here say no more of it, and should not, indeed, have said so much, had it not been to let this Author and others see, that these Things have not so strong and full an Evidence *as Sense is capable of*. And to carry our Assent or Belief of any Thing beyond the Evidence and Proof of it, is, I think, Credulity, Enthusiasm, and implicit Faith.

3dly. We may observe farther, that Jesus Christ, while he was living and conversing among the *Jews*, and being himself a *Jew*, was forced to accommodate himself, in great Measure, to the national Temper, Genius, Prejudices, and Prepossession of that People, with the greatest Meekness, Patience, and Self-

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Self-Denial; he bore with such common Prejudices and radicated Superstition among them, which he knew to be too deeply rooted and incurable: He had many Things to say, even to his own Disciples, which *they could not yet bear*. Such Misapprehensions and Prejudices therefore, as he found invincible among them, he left to God and Providence, and the future Event of Things. Had he plainly and explicitly declared to his Disciples and most zealous Followers, that they were much mistaken in him, that he was not the Man they took him for, that he was not that Prince of the House of *David*, and lineally descended from him, who was to restore the Kingdom, free them from the *Roman* Yoke, and establish a fifth Monarchy, or universal Empire at *Jerusalem*: Had he declared this, I say, plainly and expressly, his own Disciples would have forsook him to a Man, and he could have done no Good at all among them. This must have dashed and defeated the whole Design at once. On the other Hand, had he declared directly and plainly for the Messiahship and Kingdom, the *Romans* must have necessarily taken Cognizance of it, and cut him off as a Rebel, Traitor, and Enemy to *Cæsar*. This was a very great Dilemma, and therefore the divine Prophet, though sent immediately from God, found it necessary not to declare openly and plainly either one Way or the other. When *John Baptist* in Prison sent two of his Disciples

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Disciples to him for a positive, categorical Answer, whether he was the Messiah, or the Person expected and promised as the Deliverer and Restorer of the Nation, or no, he gives no direct Answer, but, Go and tell *John* what you see and hear, *the Dead are raised, the Blind receive their Sight, the Lame walk, &c.* And from hence it was concluded, that he was really the Messiah, or the promised Restorer of the *Jewish* Nation, though he did not yet care to own it. But this was a gross Mistake of *John Baptist*, who had first proclaim'd him under this Character of Messiahship at *Jordan*, of his own Disciples, and other Followers who had believed in him, and adhered to him as their national Messiah. But the great Prophet himself had given no real Occasion for this, the *Romans* were fully satisfy'd of it, and would have saved him if they could, and the Madness of those who would have set him up as the King of *Israel*, or the Messiah of the *Jews*, was made but a common Jest, and treated with all the Contempt imaginable. And this proved the greatest Shock and Confusion to his own Disciples, and drove them almost to their Wits End, as the Event evidently shews. Such was the hard Fate of this great and holy Prophet, to be hated and despised by his Enemies, betray'd by one of his own Disciples, and misunderstood and misrepresented by all the rest. And unhappy was it, in human

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Judgment, that such a Prophet, with his divine, irresistible Doctrines, was sent to the *Jews* only, and that he did not appear among the *Gentiles*, who in all Probability would have given him a better Reception, as they did the Gospel afterward, when it came to be preach'd in its Power and Purity by St. *Paul*. This great Apostle, and only Apostle of the *Gentiles*, in preaching and publishing the Religion of God and Nature, made no Use of Miracles, either of his own Miracles, or those of Christ himself; though in this Power of Miracles he was not inferior to the first and chiefest Apostles, not excepting even *Peter* himself, as he assures us in his Epistle to the *Galatians*. He preached, indeed, the Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead, and the Power and Authority he had thereby received from God, as a Fact which he thought sufficiently attested, though he had not been an Eye-Witness of it. But he did not confine Salvation to this Belief, as *Peter* had done. He appeals to Nature and Reason for the Truth of Christ's Doctrines, and declares, that every Man shall be judged by the Law he had been under, whether the written Law of the *Jews*, or the common Law of Nature, as appearing in the Works of Creation, and written upon the Hearts of Men. And having premised thus much, the Substance of which I had urged before, I shall now go on with the Author.

From

From the 107th to the 114th Page, the Author takes some Pains to prove, in Opposition to me, that Jesus Christ wrought his Miracles as an Attestation to the Truth of the *Doctrines* which he had then to teach and deliver to them, and not to prove his divine Authority as a true Prophet, and that he did not cast out Devils, and work Miracles by a diabolical Power or Confederacy with the Devil, which was the main Objection against him. But I would ask this Writer, what *new Doctrines* had Christ to teach and deliver, which had not been abundantly proved before, in this Way of Miracles, by *Moses* and the Prophets? If he could tell us what *Doctrines* those Miracles were wrought to prove, and which the *Jews* did not believe before, he would solve the whole Difficulty. Christ himself often declares, that he came not to teach or preach any new *Doctrines*, or to introduce any new Religion. He appeals to *Moses* and the Prophets, and to the Miracles wrought, or Evidence produced by them, for every Thing which he taught, or urged upon them. He declares, that he came not to destroy or set aside the Law, either in Whole or in Part; and he was a thorough Conformist himself even to the ceremonial Law, and taught others to do the same: Only he attempted to revive the moral Law, and to restore it to its true Use and Intention, and to throw off such extra-legal and super-

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stitious Doctrines and Usages, which they had receiv'd by Tradition from their Elders, and which tended only to advance the Power and Interest of the Priests. If these Miracles, therefore, were intended to prove the Truth of all his Doctrines, they must prove the continued Obligation of the ceremonial, as well as of the moral Law; for Christ himself practised and taught both. And, consequently, if the Miracles were intended as a Proof of Doctrines, they must prove the whole Scheme of *Judaism*. And 'tis plain, that the *Galilean* Apostles and Disciples understood nothing else, who continued as strict and rigid *Jews*, with Respect to their Conformity to the whole Law, after the Death of Christ, as they had been before.

But this Author has intirely mistaken the Use and Intention of the Miracles, as quoted by the Evangelists, which was to prove, that Jesus was their promised Messiah, or that Prince of the House of *David*, and lineally descended from him, who was to restore the Kingdom, and deliver the Nation. 'Tis plain, from the Genealogies of *Matthew* and *Luke*, that the Design in them is to prove the Title of Jesus to the Crown, by his lineal Descent, as the right Heir from *David*, though the irreconcilable Differences in these two Accounts shew plainly, that the *Jews* had kept no certain Records of their Genealogies after the *Babylonian*, nor indeed, after the *Assyrian* Capti-

Captivity. But what is most surprizing is, that those very Evangelists, who labour to prove his hereditary Right to the Kingdom, as lineally descended from *David*, assure us, at the same Time, that he had no natural, human Descent at all; but that *Mary* conceiv'd him by the *Holy Ghost*, or *immediate Power* of God, while she was a pure Virgin. And upon this Supposition he was no more the Son of *David*, than of *Saul*, and no more of the Seed of *Abraham*, than of *Melchizedek*. And as two of the Evangelists mention nothing of this, so there is no original Proof or Evidence, but *Mary's* own Word, while she lay under a strong Suspicion, and *Joseph* had a Mind to put her away privately, without making her a publick Example. And this, it seems, he had certainly done, had not an Angel appeared and spoke to him in a Dream, and told him, that what *Mary* said was true. But that an Angel appeared and spoke to him in a Dream, can signify no more than that he dream'd an Angel appear'd and spoke to him. I cannot pretend to say, that this supernatural Fact was not true, or that the Thing is impossible; but this, I think, I may be bold to say, that the Evidence for it was not so clear and strong as Sense could make it, nor quite so clear as might be expected to make such a Thing probable. It would doubtless have been more satisfactory, had there been some other Witnesses to the

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Appearance and Discourse of the Angel with her, that the Thing might not have depended on her sole Testimony, who was the Person concerned, and whose Reputation lay at Stake.

But to return to the Argument: I think I have clearly and unanswerably prov'd, that there can be no Connexion between Power and Truth; and that *many* such Acts of Power, how extraordinary soever, can no more create or make any such Connexion than *one*. The Miracles could not be wrought to prove the Truth of any new Doctrines or new Religion, which this Prophet was then introducing among the *Jews*, because he disclaims any such. But these Miracles are plainly produced and urged by the Historians to prove his prophetic Messiahship, or Right to the Kingdom, in their national Sense, which he had all along disclaim'd; and though he was tried and put to Death for it, yet no sufficient Proof could be brought, and they were forced to suborn Witnesses for it. This his Renunciation of the Messiahship or Kingdom to the very last, and when he came to die, put his Disciples into the utmost Dread and Consternation. They now saw they had been mistaken in, and join'd a false Messiah; upon which they abandoned him, gave up all farther Hope in him, and fled for their Lives.

But

But after all, that Miracles can be no Proof of Doctrines, or divine Commission and Approbation of Persons, we have Christ's own Word and Declaration to vouch. For many in the last Day will come and plead with him, that in his Name they had preached and prophesied, and cast out Devils, and done many wonderful Works, who yet will be rejected, and sent off *as Workers of Iniquity*. Here had been great Miracles wrought, as Prophecy, casting out Devils, healing Diseases, &c. which were all Works in themselves, as having a natural, direct Tendency to the Good of Mankind. And yet as the moral Character was wanting, they could make out no divine Commission or Approbation. The Prophets *Elijah* and *Elisha*, without pretending to prove any new Doctrines, wrought many Miracles, and, among others, raised the Dead. Nay, the very Bones of *Elisha*, after he had been dead and buried, recovered a dead Corpse, and made him a living Man again, when the Body had been thrown into his Grave, 2 *Kings* xiii. 21. This, perhaps, might be the first Rise and Foundation of the divine Power and Virtue of the dead Saints, by which an infinite Number of the most amazing Miracles were wrought all over *Christendom* in the fourth Century, and for which we have the Testimony of as great and celebrated Men for Learning and Piety, as the Church of Christ had ever produced.

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But this was all Ignorance, Enthusiasm, or Imposture; whereas there could have been no such Thing in the World two or three hundred Years before.

I had urged, that Faith of Healing, or a strong, invincible Persuasion, that Jesus was the Messiah or national Deliverer, was a Condition *sine qua non* these miraculous Cures were wrought, and that therefore the Strength of Faith, or natural Power of Imagination, might be the principal Cause of such extraordinary Cures, of which we have a great many more modern Instances: *If thou believest thou may'st be healed, thy Faith has made thee whole, or be it unto thee according to thy Faith*, being almost the constant Language and Expression to those who had been, or were to be healed. But our Author insists upon it, p. 114. That there were some Exceptions to this, where a personal Faith was not necessary to the Cure. He therefore asks, *Could the Centurion's Faith heal his dying Servant? Or could the Ruler's Faith heal his Son, and that in an Instant, and at a Distance?* I answer, no; but the Servant and the Son knowing where the Prophet then was, and at what Time the Master and the Father would come up and speak with him, and being firmly and invincibly persuaded, that as soon as Jesus could be spoke with they should be healed, their Faith and Imagination, tho' at a Distance, might work as strongly, and have

have the same Effect, as if they had been personally present at the same Time. And that the Power of Imagination and Strength of Persuasion had a great Hand in these Miracles, seems pretty plain in the Cases or Instances of *Peter* and *Paul*, and the extraordinary Cures they wrought, without knowing any Thing of the Matter themselves. With Regard to *Peter*, *They brought the Sick into the Streets, and laid them in Beds and Couches, that at least the Shadow of Peter, when he came by, might shadow some of them.* And of this Sort of Believers, *there came Multitudes out of the Cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick Folks, and them who were vexed with unclean Spirits, who were healed,* Acts v. 15, 16. And thus when *Paul* was at *Ephesus*, *God wrought no small Miracles by the Hands of Paul: So that from his Body were brought unto the Sick, Napkins and Handkerchiefs, and the Diseases departed, and the evil Spirits went out of them,* Acts xix. 11, 12. These, perhaps, are some of the strongest Instances of Enthusiasm, and the Power of Imagination, that ever were known. But here was no voluntary Agency or Concurrence of those Apostles themselves: They could cast out Devils, and heal all Manner of Diseases, by a Shadow or Handkerchief, without knowing any Thing of the Matter. Surely here their Faith made them whole! But the Author having given up these miraculous

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culous Cures, by the Power of Faith, or Force of Imagination, has nothing left but the Resurrection Miracles, which are very few, and these not altogether indisputable, or as clear as any *sensible Fact* could be.

I had hitherto supposed the certain, indubitable Truth of the Facts themselves, and upon that Supposition, I think I had evidently proved, that those Miracles related of Christ and the Apostles, could have no such Intention, nor answer any such End, as this Author has assigned them: They could not be designed to prove the Truth of any new Doctrines, or new Religion; because Christ himself, and all his Disciples, were strict and thorough *Jews*, according to the Law of *Moses*, and never pretended to any other Religion. It was only a Faction among *Jews* themselves, and the only Question then was, Whether this Jesus was the Messiah, the King of *Israel*, or that Prince of the House of *David*, who was to restore the Kingdom, and deliver the Nation? Here the *Galilean* Disciples, and those that adhered to him, maintained the Affirmative; and all the rest of the Nation stood to the Negative, and rejected him under that Character: But they did not reject him as a Prophet and Preacher of Righteousness, and many of the Priests and Rulers believed in him so far. The whole Nation would have received him as a Prophet, as they had done *John Baptist*, had there

there been no Pretensions to the Messiahship, or Kingdom: But his own Disciples had been the true Cause and Occasion of all the Troubles and Confusion of that Time, and of bringing their Master to the Cross, by their mistaken Notions of him, groundless Expectations from him, and the false Reports they spread about him, as the *Messiah*, or *King of Israel*. And, therefore, when Jesus was taken, and put upon his Examination and Trial, and had deny'd the Charge brought against him, his Disciples all forsook him, and fled; and, had they stood it, and been brought to an Examination themselves, they must have confess'd, that they had always understood and taken him for the Messiah, or for that Person who had been foretold and promised, and who was now sent to restore the Kingdom, and deliver the Nation from their Subjection to the *Romans*. And such Evidence must necessarily have condemn'd him by the *Roman Law*; and *Pilate*, in such a Case, could not have labour'd to save him.

Now when Christ's own Disciples were under such Mistakes and Misapprehensions concerning his true Character, the Nature of his Kingdom, and Design of his Mission; 'tis no Wonder, that they should misrepresent Things, and give an inconsistent Account of him. When he, in all his Parables and Allegories relating to himself and his Kingdom, meant one Thing, and they understood another,

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'tis impossible there should have been any right Understanding between them. But when the Disciples came afterward to believe in Jesus, and preach him openly, as risen from the Dead, all their former Hopes and Expectations were reviv'd, and more strengthened and confirmed than ever. He was now the Messiah, the Restorer of the Kingdom, and Deliverer of the Nation again, and was to come again from Heaven, and set up his Kingdom among them in that very Generation. And now they represent him as having plainly and expressly declared all this, while he was living and conversing with them; whereas 'tis plain, that they had never thought, or so much as dream'd of his being to rise again from the Dead, at first, when he had been crucified. But as soon as they came to believe the Resurrection, they resumed all the same Misapprehensions of him, and made the same wrong Construction of what he had said, as they had done before in his Life-Time.

'Tis very plain, that these Miracles, which made so much Noise afterwards, were not generally believed or credited at that Time. His own Brethren did not believe the Reports of them: They did not receive him as the Messiah while he lived, and he could work none of those uncontestable Miracles at *Nazareth* in his own Family, and among his Neighbours and Acquaintance, where he had
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been born, and brought up. His own Brethren rebuke and rally him, for keeping himself so very close and private in such a remote Part of the Country, and for not appearing openly at *Jerusalem*, and in the great Towns and Cities of *Judea*, if he could do such mighty Works as had been rumour'd of him. *His Brethren said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy Disciples may see thy Works which thou doest; for there is no Man that doth any Thing secretly, when he himself seeketh to be famous. If thou doest these Things, shew thyself to the World*, John vii. 3, 4. This was a smart Piece of Raillery, and shews, that his own Brethren were now as much Unbelievers with Regard to the Messiahship then talk'd of, as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* themselves.

Had this great Prophet and Reformer had a discretionary Power of working Miracles in Proof of his Messiahship, no Doubt but he would have chosen to work them chiefly upon Unbelievers, and especially in the Sight and Presence of such, as the most effectual Means for their Conviction and Conversion. Nay, he would have cast out all the Devils, and healed all the Diseases in the Country: But yet we find the Case was quite otherwise; for when the unbelieving *Scribes* and *Pharisees* often urge him to shew some Signs, or work some Miracle before them, he always refuses to gratify them, or to give them
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any such Conviction. None but Believers, or such as had a strong, invincible Persuasion of his being the Messiah and Restorer of the Kingdom, could receive the least Benefit from any of those Miracles. And this Faith was not only what Jesus could not, but likewise what he would not give, had it been in his Power, since we find, that he endeavoured all along, as much as possible, to suppress and bear it down, and quash the Reports of it. This strong Persuasion, therefore, concerning Jesus as the national Messiah, was a Sort of over-bearing Enthusiasm, or Madness, which had seized the Disciples, and a great Part of the People, in and about *Galilee*. And when the People were thus heated, and wrought up to such a Temper, no Doubt but they were capable of being miraculously impress'd, and could even work Miracles upon themselves. And all this they would be sure to aggrandize, and make the most of. But where there is thus any darling Party-Interest to strengthen and confirm, there is not always the strictest Regard to Truth of Facts, especially where those Facts are of an extraordinary Nature, and attested only by the *same Party*. Most of this I had either urged or intimated before; and what our Author now offers against it is so very trifling and evasive, that I wonder how he could prevail with himself to let it pass for an Answer. What the Author has farther in this

Chapter, is nothing but a theatrical Harangue upon the Clearness and Invincibility of the original Evidence, and the unexceptionable Way in which it has been convey'd and handed down to us; as to which, at present, I have nothing more to say, and shall therefore go on to his fourth Chapter.

C H A P. III.

THE Author here, in the Beginning of his fourth Chapter, complains, that I had taken no Notice of what he had offered in Defence of the Law of *Moses*, as a most wise and excellent Constitution, intended for, and actually answering several great and valuable Purposes. I must profess, that I did not willingly or designedly overlook or pass by any Argument of his to this Purpose: But whatever I might have omitted in my second Volume, I hope the Reader will find supply'd in this Defence of it. But if the Author should think otherwise, that he has sufficiently gained his Point already, that he may be silent for the future, and need say no more as to the Argument from Miracles, and the Excellency of the *Mosaic* Constitution, it will be as well, and we shall both find our own Accounts in it.

To

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To my asking, How shall we know or prove, that God did enter into a special Relation to that People? Must we take their own Words, or the proud superstitious Imagination of their own People for it? The Author replies, *p.* 128. "That it is proved by the same
 " Evidence by which the divine Authority of
 " the Law of *Moses* is proved, which was in its
 " very original Constitution in the Nature of
 " a special Covenant with that People, in
 " which God condescended to enter into a
 " peculiar Relation to them, and erected
 " them into a peculiar Polity, for wise and
 " valuable Ends; and, consequently, it was
 " confirmed by the Testimony of God him-
 " self, who, as has been already shewn, did
 " in an extraordinary Manner bear Witness
 " to the divine Mission of *Moses*, and the
 " divine Original and Authority of the Laws
 " he delivered in his Name." But must we not take their *own Words* for all this, or does it not all depend upon the *Infallibility* of their *own Historians*? I have said a great deal to shew, from the Nature and Reason of the Thing itself, that their Law, especially the ceremonial Part of it, could not be a divine Institution. And how does the Author prove the contrary, but by quoting their *own Words*, and urging their *own Authority* for it? For I am sure, he has not answered or confuted any one Argument of mine; and this will farther appear, as we go along.

I had proved from *St. Paul*, that the *Abrahamic* Covenant was perfectly distinct from the Law of *Moses*, that it subsisted before the Law, and that the Terms or Conditions of it, as a Covenant of Righteousness, must extend to all Mankind, independent of *Moses* and the Law. This is what I had evidently proved, and the Author, for any Thing I can see, grants it. But, saith he, *p. 129*. Doth it follow from thence, that God never entered into any special Relation to the People of *Israel* at all, nor erected them into a peculiar Polity? No, it does not follow from thence; but it plainly follows, that the *Jewish* Nation were not a peculiar People, as the Seed of *Abraham*, or in Consequence of that Covenant and Promise from which they claim'd; and this *St. Paul* clearly proves, as Christ himself had done before. But the Author would here prove the Peculiarity of the *Jewish* Nation from the Law; whereas they never pleaded the Law for this Privilege, but the Covenant of Promise, or Covenant of God with *Abraham*. They pretended to be elected in *Abraham*, and not in *Moses*. The Law of *Moses* was indeed peculiar to that Nation, and so is every other national Law peculiar to those who are under it. The Law made this Nation the peculiar People of *Moses*, but not the peculiar People of *God*. *St. Paul*, indeed, could not directly attack even the ceremonial Law; had he expressly deny'd its divine Au-

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thority, the *Jews* would have stoned him. But as he represents it, as a carnal, blinding, enslaving, and insufferable Scheme, and rejected it in its literal, and only original Sense, as instituted by *Moses*, 'tis very plain, that he could not believe it to be of divine Institution.

The Author had urged, that the *Mosaic* Constitution or Law, was of great Advantage for keeping up the Knowledge and Worship of the one true God in the World. To which I had replied, That this Law never answered any such End, either with Respect to that Nation, or any other. And the Author, so far as I can see, confutes this, by granting it: Only he observes, that notwithstanding all the Degeneracy, Revolts, and Apostasy of that Nation to Idolatry, there were still some among them, who retained the Knowledge and Worship of the true God. And the same may be said of all other Nations, for God had never left himself without Witness of his eternal Power and Godhead. Amidst all the Idolatry and vulgar Superstition of the Heathens, their Philosophers and Moralists, and almost all Men of a liberal Education among them, had as right Notions of God and Providence, as any of the *Jews* themselves; and they look'd upon the vulgar Religion, as only a Piece of State-Policy, and as such only they outwardly comply'd with it. The *Medes* and *Persians*, two mighty Nations,

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Nations, had always retained the Knowledge and Worship of one true God, which they never received from the *Jews*. And whatever it may be imagined that God had promised to *Abraham*, sure I am, that this Nation was never a Blessing to any other Nation. They have always proved a Curse where-ever they have come, and were the greatest and most outrageous Opposers of the Gospel at first, from their Zeal for the Law.

I had argued, that the popular, local, oracular God of *Israel*, who always locally resided among them, sat upon the Mercy-Seat between the Cherubims over the Ark, and was occasionally carried about from Place to Place, could not be the true God, the infinite Creator and Governor of the World; but must have been an Idol after the Manner of *Egypt*, and other Nations, who had such Gods. And that the Worship paid him in costly, burdensome Sacrifices, useless Ceremonies, and bare, external, carnal Observances, could not be agreeable to the Nature, Perfections, and inward spiritual Worship of the true God. And this seems to be so just and necessary a Conclusion, that one would think any Man free from Prejudice, must see and own it at first View. But should our Author allow this, or should it be proved against him, it must overthrow his whole Scheme at once; and, therefore, I shall consider very

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particularly and distinctly, all that he has offered in Answer to it.

He pretends, *p.* 135. That it was the true God, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, who thus manifested himself to the *Israelites*, by a local, visible Presence, and audible Voice, as the God of *Israel* only, and of no other Nation. But that the supream Being should continue a visible, sensible Signal of his Presence in, and Protection of one Nation only, as their God, Guardian, and Deliverer, while he was a sworn Enemy to all other Nations, is as abhorrent to the Nature and Perfections of the true God, as any Thing he could imagine. That God should manifest such an unreasonable Partiality, or groundless Respect of Persons, as to love and favour one of the wickedest Nations in the World, while he hated and abandoned all the rest, is as credible as that the true God is an Idol. But if they were so grossly superstitious, as to imagine, that the God who thus manifested his special Presence and Favour only among them, was the true God, the Creator and Governor of the World, their whole History, from first to last, shews, that this was false in Fact; and that in the Course of his Providence and moral Government, he generally succeeded, prospered, and favoured their Enemies, while he plagued and distressed them. And if they worshiped the true God under such a false, idolatrous Notion of him, it was the very same Thing, in Effect,

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Effect, as worshipping an Idol; especially when the Worship to be paid him, and which *Moses* had instituted, was of the very same Nature and Kind with that which the Heathen Nations paid to their tutelar Idols. For a Priesthood and Sacrifices were instituted to this God of *Israel*, with as much senseless Ceremony, external Pomp, and costly, burdensome Services, which were as carnal, unprofitable, and as contrary to the Nature of true Religion, as ever had been seen in *Egypt*. But the People were persuaded, and made believe, that while they continued this Sort of Worship in the *Mosaic* Tribe and Family, and offered no Sacrifices, or paid any Revenues, but to their own Priests, the true God would be always with them, and for them; and, indeed, *Moses* seems to have understood the Power of Enthusiasm, and national Pride, as well as any Politician since his Time. But this confining the Presence and Favour of God to a Place, and to some visible, sensible Symbols of his being with them, and ready to assist them, was the very Idolatry of the Heathens. They were not so stupid and senseless as to imagine, that those Idols, or Symbols of divine Favour, were Jehovah, or the supream Being himself: But they thought, that the celestial, mediatorial Gods, or Guardian Angels, had a particular, local Residence in those Places, as the Ministers of Providence, and the sensible Signals and Representations of

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God's special Presence and Favour. And in like Manner the *Israelites* had their guardian, residential Angels: They had the Angel of the Covenant, or Angel of God's Presence, always with them, as they conceited, and had been taught to believe. And these mediatorial or ministerial Angels they petitioned and invoked as their Guardians, Governors, Disposers under God, and as his Ministers and Representatives. And thus *Jaakob* on his Death-Bed invokes God and the Angel distinctly and separately, for the same Blessings, as supposing his Guardian Angel to be the commissioned, authorized Minister of God to him. And thus when an Angel was supposed to appear and speak to Men, it is said, that *Jehovah* appeared and declared so also, that is, *Jehovah* appeared and spoke this or that, by his ministerial Angel and Representative. And I have shewn in the Introduction, or Preliminary Discourse, that this ministerial Worship of Angels, or of God by Angels, was the Rise and Foundation of all the Idolatry of *Egypt*, and other Nations. And I cannot see, that *Moses*, in his Scheme, had much mended the Matter, or altered the Case in general, though he had thrown off the grosser Superstition of Image-Worship, and the Multiplicity of such local, tutelar Gods.

When the *Philistines* took the Ark, though the *Israelites* could not imagine that *Jehovah* was not still present in their Country, as well

as every where else; yet they thought they had lost their ministerial Guardian and Protector, or the Angel by whom they mediocrally worshiped God; and the Idolatry and tutelar Worship of the Heathens was of the same Nature and Kind. But the Author grossly mistook me, in imagining, that I thought that the *Israelites* worshiped an Idol, or local, tutelar God, as Jehovah, or the supream God, as he puts it upon me, *p.* 134, 135. But I take this Presence of the Angel of the Covenant, as the continued, residential Representative of God to the *Israelites*, and the Worship or Regard paid to him on that Account, to have been as much a Delusion as the heathen, imaginary, tutelar Deities. And it seems to me extreamly plain, that this Angel of the Covenant, or Angel of God's Presence, though he was not Jehovah himself, yet being his immediate Minister and Representative, and as they worshiped God in and by him; he was next to him in Honour and Dignity, and was so considered and regarded. But as the more ignorant and superstitious Vulgar among them did not, perhaps, consider this Subordination of their local, tutelar Deities, to the supream God; but often worshiped them immediately and ultimately, without any farther Reference; so it seems plain enough, that the Gross of the People among the *Israelites*, who for Ignorance and Stupidity came not behind any

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other Nation in the World, did after the same Manner confound their local Guardian with the Jehovah himself, and regarded and worshiped him ultimately, as the supream God. There are so many vulgar Passages, and popular Phrases in the Books of *Moses*, which look strongly this Way, that one can hardly help concluding, that this was the Case. It was Jehovah himself, as distinguish'd from the Angel, who appeared and spake to *Moses*, attended him up and down in the Wilderness, and conversed familiarly with him Face to Face. It was Jehovah himself, as personally present, who gave the Law to *Moses*, was seen by the Elders of *Israel* upon the Mount, and who afterwards gave Commandment concerning *Solomon's* building him a House to dwell in. And these People were no such Philosophers, or abstract Reasoners, as not to take such Things from *Moses* in their obvious, literal Sense. And we find, that all Politicians, in every Country, so far as we have any History, have had one Religion for the gross, ignorant Vulgar, and another for the Wiser and more Learned. This has always been so hitherto; and, I fear, must still be so.

When I am speaking of the popular Notion of the *God of Israel*, and how *Moses* represented him to the People, as the God and Protector of that Nation only, and who would be an Enemy and Avenger of all other

other Nations, who should dare to disturb or molest his chosen, beloved People, while they kept to this political Law; the Author presently flies off to the Descriptions which the Prophets had given of the universal Power, Presence, and paternal Care of the supream and true God, many hundred Years after the Days of *Moses*, and about the Time of the *Assyrian* Captivity. But there is no Dealing with a Man who will contradict one in every Thing, and always resolve to misunderstand what he cannot confute. That the popular Notion of the God of *Israel* was, that he was the God, the Guardian and Protector of that Nation only, that they were his only chosen and beloved People, no Body, I believe, but this Writer, would have deny'd. And as to his Covenant of Peculiarity, and particular Election of this Nation, he has made but a very poor Hand of it yet, and can produce no Authority for it, without taking up with the *Jewish* national Prejudices, and bringing in this People as Vouchers for themselves: And this to prove a Position that is as contrary to the whole Course and Run of the History itself of what was really true in Fact, as it is to the Perfections of God, and the Reason of Things. But because I had said, that it was always the universally receiv'd Notion of this Nation, that they were the only peculiar elect People of God in the World, and that they would have
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stoned any Prophet who should have come to them with any other Doctrine; the Author, p. 139. breaks out into this Exclamation, "I am so used to the Author's Way of representing Things, that I am not surprized at this, though ever so contrary to Truth and Decency." And then he goes on to observe what Representations the Prophets, in after Ages, gave us of God and Providence universally respecting all Mankind. But the Question here is, What was the general prevailing and popular Notion of God among the *Israelites* and *Jews*, with Respect to themselves, as the only peculiar elect People and Favourites of God upon Earth? And whether this Notion and Opinion of the Peculiarity of so wicked and profligate a Nation be not contrary to the Perfections of God, to the Reason of Things, and to all historical Truth in Fact? It appears from their whole History, that this People were never the peculiar Favourites of Heaven; and yet no Prophet ever dared tell them so, even under their greatest Degeneracy and Wickedness. And was not all this vain Boasting then owing to Enthusiasm and national Pride? But however they might be the peculiar People of *Moses*, and his Inheritance, they were never, surely, the peculiar People of God. But this Pride is still peculiar to Predestinarians, and visionary Enthusiasts. I have said thus much, to let the Reader see, that either this
Nation

Nation worshiped a false God, or, which is the same Thing, the true God, under an idolatrous, false Notion and Idea of him. But this, I think, is plain, that God, in a peculiar Sense, is the God only of the Righteous, or his true, spiritual Worshipers, of what Nation or Country soever they are; and for any one Nation to claim this Honour and Privilege peculiarly to themselves, exclusive of all others, is the highest Presumption and Arrogance, as Christ himself and St. *Paul* openly declared, and evidently proved of this Nation. But this proud, assuming People were always famous and remarkable for affronting God, and insulting all the rest of Mankind.

With Regard to the Miracles in *Egypt*, and at the *Red Sea*, I must refer the Reader to the Introduction, or Preliminary Discourse, where I have considered this Matter more at large, and shewn the great Improbability and Self-Inconsistency of the whole Account, as it is related and represented by the *Hebrew* Historian. It will be sufficient here to observe in general, that as these Historians always affect to ascribe almost every Thing that happened to them, and the whole Conduct of Providence towards them, for many hundred Years together, to supernatural Causes, and immediate, divine Interposition, they are the less to be rely'd on in such Matters. They never distinguished between the permissive and effective Will of God. Whatever was brought
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about by any uncommon, extraordinary, or unexpected Providence, where no human Foresight or Contrivance had appear'd, they ascribed all to Miracle and supernatural Interposition. If we take Things in the literal, obvious Sense, as they are represented in those Writings, we must conclude, that for above a thousand Years successively, God, in governing and conducting this holy, peculiar Nation, continually suspended all the general Laws of Nature, and common Providence, in Favour of them, and as a Mark of their Peculiarity and distinguished Care of Heaven. They always invoked the Almighty in every Thing where they themselves were concerned; they often ascribe the most common, natural Events to supernatural Causes; and this, where the natural Causes which brought them about, are visible in the Story itself. In short, a great Part of what they relate, as to the Manner and Causes of the Facts, could meet with no Credit, were they related by other Historians, who have not the Prejudice of Infallibility on their Side, and where Men think themselves at Liberty to make a rational, discretionary Judgment. Our Author ought to have proved this *Hebrew* historical Infallibility, before he had taken it as a first Principle, and argued upon it as granted, as he does all along. But as it cannot be done, the learned Reasoners in this Way have nothing to do, but to quote a Text of Scripture, in
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some Sense or other, right or wrong, and then come off triumphantly, with a *quod erat demonstrandum*.

The Author next, *p.* 143. endeavours, as well as he can, to excuse the *Israelites* in making and worshiping a Calf, and ascribing their Deliverance to the Gods of *Egypt*, within forty Days after the Promulgation of the Law, and about four Months after their passing the *Red Sea*. And here he will have it, that it was not the Gods of *Egypt*, but the God of *Israel*, Jehovah himself, whom they intended to worship under this *Egyptian* Symbol, or subordinate God. But supposing this to have been the Case, it was however done in Defiance of the Law, which had been just given from God in the most extraordinary and astonishing Way of Miracles; and which Law they had just before sworn, in the most solemn Manner, to obey. I had mentioned this as an incredible Thing, that they should act thus under such a Blaze of Miracles, and Demonstrations of divine Power; and, therefore, concluded, that either the Story of the Miracles, or of this sudden Defection of the People, must have been a Forgery, and, in all Probability, the former. But the Author takes no Notice of the Argument, where the Stress of it lay. But as to the *Israelites* intending to worship Jehovah, or the true God, under this *Egyptian* Symbol, he might have known, that this was the very
Idolatry

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Idolatry and Worship of the *Egyptians* themselves, who worshiped Jehovah, or the supream God, by the Symbol of a Calf, or Bull; that is, they worshiped God by the Symbol of the Sun in *Taurus*, as most of the Eastern Nations did, whatever other idolatrous Symbols, and subordinate Deities, they might have. The *Egyptians*, indeed, did not know the supream Being by the Name Jehovah, which *Moses* gave him; but they took Jehovah to have been some subordinate, national, and tutelar God, by whom *Moses* had been sent. None of the Heathen Nations, I mean the knowing, thinking Men among them, were ever so stupid and senseless, as to imagine any of their national, tutelar Gods, or providential Governors of Countries and Provinces, to have been the supream God, the infinite, eternal Creator, and Lord of the whole Earth. But they worshiped God under such Symbols, and by the Ministry and Mediation of those subordinate Deities. I had almost overlook'd what the Author offers, *p.* 141. to justify *Moses's* Miracle, in bringing Water instantly out of a Rock, by striking it with his Rod or Wand. I had observed, that as the *Israelites* had never seen any fresh Water Springs, or Water flowing out of the Rocks in the *Lower Egypt*, where they had lived, they might easily have been cheated and imposed on in such a Case, and take that for a most stupendous Miracle, which is the

the common Work of God and Nature. And I strengthned the Argument with this, that *Moses*, by this Miracle, forfeited his Entrance into the Land of *Canaan*, and had almost lost his Credit with the People; but to this the witty Author thus triumphantly replies, p. 141. "The Water, it seems, had been
" there all along. It had come flowing from
" the Rock, and had *passed by their Tents*;
" but the poor, senseless Creatures could not
" see it, though they were, at that very
" Time, ready to perish for want of it. And
" when he brought them to the Rock, he
" made them believe, there was not one
" Drop of Water issuing out of it, till he
" struck it with his Rod, though it was all
" the while gushing out in great Abundance,
" a rapid Spring before their Eyes. To
" attempt a serious Answer to such wild Sup-
" positions, would be to make myself as ri-
" diculous as this Writer; and he must sup-
" pose *these Nations* to be as senseless, as he
" makes the *Israelites* to be, if he imagines
" such Stuff as this can pass upon them. It
" were to be wished, he had gone through
" the other Miracles, which he might easily
" have done in the same Way." I have
quoted this Passage from our sprightly, hu-
morous Author, because I admire it the most
of any Thing in his Book. But can this sa-
gacious Writer imagine, that *Moses*, who
knew the Place, had not Wit or Skill enough
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to draw up the People to this new Incampment in such a Manner, as not to bring them in Sight of the Water, either of the Fountain, or any Rivulet issuing from it, till he had struck the Blow, and given the Word of Command? It must be supposed, that *Moses*, before he decamp't from the Defart of *Zin*, and came to *Rephidim*, knew whither he was going, and where Water might be had; for otherwise he might have taken any other dry Rock nearer at Hand, or have brought Water out of the dry Ground in the Defart, before the People had taken so hard a March as to be just perishing with Thirst. But when he had brought them to a Spring, or Water-flowing Rock, why was it necessary, that they should see this, or be brought in Sight of the Spring or Rivulet before *Moses* had wrought the Miracle, and shown the divine Power and Virtue of his Wand? Why must the Water have flow'd through their Tents, or gush'd out in a rapid Spring before their Eyes, before they had been brought in Sight of it, or knew, that there was any Spring about the Rock? But 'tis pleasant to see how this ingenious Author delights himself with the Creatures of his own Imagination, and creates Difficulties upon my Supposition, where there were none. But if *Moses* could do such Things with his Rod, if he could bring Water out of a dry Rock, why not out of one dry Rock as well as another, or out of the

the dry Ground? Why might he not have created Bread and Flesh, as well as Water; or have made Sheep and Cattle in the Wilderness, as well as Serpents and Lice in *Egypt*? It will be said, doubtless, that he could not do this, because God did not think fit to enable, or authorize him. God then, it seems, could not, or would not, enable *Moses* to work the most useful and beneficial Miracles, but only such as might serve for Plagues and Punishments, which was, doubtless, most agreeable to the Nature and Perfections of the true God. But there is one Expression in this Paragraph, which seems to me as dark as the rest are bright. He says, I must suppose *these Nations* to be as senseless as I make the *Israelites* to be, if I imagine, that such Stuff as this can pass upon them. But who were *these Nations*? Were there any other Nations besides the *Israelites*, who were Witnesses to the Truth and Reality of this, or any other of *Moses's* Miracles in the Wilderness? I suppose the Author might want such Witnesses, but not finding them upon Earth, he was forced to fetch them from the Moon. But *it were to be wish'd I had gone through the other Miracles, which I might easily have done in the same Way.* I hope then, if I have satisfied him in this, it may excuse me from the rest. But I do not think it is to be wish'd, that I should first suppose the infallible Truth of a Story, and then confute it as improbable, or

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incredible. The Author may suppose, as he does, an Infallibility which he cannot prove; but he must give me Leave to exercise a Judgment of Discretion, and to separate the Probable from the Improbable, in Nature and Reason, in this, as well as in all other History. If Dr. *Leland* should think fit to dispute with another Man, upon a Principle that is not agreed upon, and that he cannot prove, he is, doubtless, at Liberty; but then he need not make his Adversary as ridiculous as himself. But this Author, we see, can write with a Spirit, when he has a good Cause; and it is always from the too great Weight of his Subject, when he seems to be dull.

I had said, it cannot be proved, or made appear, that *Moses* ever wrote the historical Parts of the *Pentateuch*. To which the Author replied, That *we have as full a Proof of this, as can be reasonably desired, or as we can have, that any Book was written by any Author under whose Name it goes.* I granted, that we might be as sure of one, as the other; because we may be sure of neither, but may be sure enough of the contrary. The historical Books of Scripture contain the History and Memoirs of the Lives and Actions of their great Men, of their Judges, Kings, and Prophets; but who ever thought, or can suppose, that those Men wrote the Story of their own Lives and Deaths. I had given many Instances out of the *Pentateuch*, and the

the Books of *Josbua* and *Judges*, to shew that those historical Facts must have been written long after the Days of *Moses*, and could not have been earlier than the Time of *Samuel* and *Saul*. But the Author does not think himself concerned to take Notice of any Thing of this, and, therefore, I need not repeat it again, or add any Thing more to it. But instead of answering the Objections, he urges the Authority of the modern *Jews*, who gave these Books the same Name, and ascribed them to the same Authors that we do now. But the Name of a Book can be no Proof at all of the Author. The Books of *Samuel* could not have been written by *Samuel*, since the first Book brings down the History to the Death of *Saul*, which was some Years after *Samuel's* Death; and the second Book carries down the Story about forty Years still lower, to the latter End of *David's* Reign. As to the *Pentateuch*, or Books of *Moses*, as they are called, the *Jews* always distinguished between the Law, which was undoubtedly written by *Moses*, and the *Hagiographa*; and they did not think this latter of equal Authority with the former. But saith the Author, "This was never pretended to be contested, but by a few in these latter Times, who come too late, and whose Objections are too weak and trifling, to disturb an uninterrupted Possession of so many Ages," p. 145. But was not this pretended Right of uninter-

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rupted Possession the very Argument used by the Papiſts againſt the Proteſtants two hundred Years ago? Had not the *Jews* ſeventeen hundred Years ago the ſame Argument againſt Chriſtianity? Or will it not hold as good againſt throwing off any old Errors or Prejudices at all? But, ſurely, the Author was hard preſs'd, when he was forced to take up with the Principles of *Jews* and Papiſts, to maintain his Chriſtianity. And one of the contemptible Moderns, whoſe Objections are too weak and trifling to be taken Notice of by this great Man, was Sir *Iſaac Newton* himſelf, in the Introduction to his Book on the Prophecies.

I ſhould have taken no Notice of any Thing this Writer has offered for ſeven or eight Pages forward, had it not been for a moſt vile and ſcandalous Imputation, which I find, *p.* 153. where he puts upon me, as charging the *Jews*, in all Ages, and even Chriſt and the Apoſtles, and all Chriſtians in general ever ſince, as being inſpired with the Spirit of the Devil, for believing the *Miracles, and divine Inspiration of Moſes*. But, I am ſure, this is as great and flagrant a Piece of Falſhood and Malice, as the Devil himſelf could have invented. It was not the *Faith*, but the *Bigotry* and perſecuting Spirit of the *Jews*, which I call'd the *Spirit of the Devil*; and for which, as is but too evident, the Chriſtians have been as remarkable as they. But I can aſſure this Calumniator,

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lumniator, in the Name of moral Truth and Righteousness, that if he himself was to believe the *Alcoran*, or all the Popish Legends in the World, I should not charge him with having the Spirit of the Devil for this, provided he did not endeavour to force or impose his Faith upon others, or use them ill, and brand them as *Infidels*, for not being of his Faith. And though it is very rare to find Men of this Writer's Principles possessed with much Charity, yet, I hope, it is not the *Faith* of the *Jews* that has infused and propagated their *Malignity* among us. But the Author, it seems, was resolved here to make me feel his Strength, and let me see how dangerous it is to provoke so *keen an Adversary*.

The Author comes next to prove the *divine Authority* of the *Israelites* Conquest of *Canaan*, and Destruction of the *Canaanites*, in Consequence of the *Abrahamic* Covenant, or the *Promise* and *Oath* of God to *Abraham*.

As this is a very extraordinary Undertaking, I shall attend the learned Doctor throughout, and consider what he has *delivered* upon it the more minutely. I had supposed, in Favour of this enormous Claim, that the *Abrahamic* Covenant, or God's Promise and Oath to *Abraham*, to settle his Posterity, or the Nation to be derived from him, in the everlasting Possession of that whole Country, at the End of four hundred Years; I had supposed, I say, that this Promise and Oath might have been

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conditional; and by this I thought to have brought off the Almighty from any Breach of Promise and Oath, though the Thing promised and sworn had not been made good to them, as to which there could be no Obligation from the Grant, when the Conditions of it had not been complied with. But the wary Author scorned to take any such Concession, as if he had rather the Charge should lie against God himself, than *Moses*. For if he should give up the Infallibility of *Moses*, he is quite undone. He insists upon it, therefore, as the Reader will see, *p.* 154. That this Covenant, Promise, and Oath, as relating to the Land of *Canaan*, must have been absolute and unconditional. And it cannot be doubted, but if I had said it had been *absolute*, he would have made it *conditional*; for he takes it as a general Rule to contradict me in every Thing, right or wrong. Well, but to please him, let this Covenant, Promise, or Oath relating to *Canaan*, be *absolute*; and, if he is content, I am. But then, we ought to see what this Promise, or absolute Oath was. *In that Day the Lord made a Covenant with Abraham, saying, unto thy Seed have I given this Land, from the River of Egypt, to the great River, the River Euphrates.* And then the several Nations and Clans inhabiting this vast Country at that Time, are reckoned up, and particularly specified, *Gen.* xv. 18—21. One would think, that in this Promise

Promise there must have been some Mistake of the Historian, since the *Israelites* were never in Possession of a tenth Part of this large Tract, from the River of *Egypt* to the *Euphrates*. But as this *Revelation* was only made to *Abraham* in a *Dream*, it is not much to be insisted on. But the same Promise had been made to *Abraham* afore, while he was awake, and just returned out of *Egypt*, and when he and *Lot* had parted, and *Lot* having chosen the Vallies in *Arabia*, to the East of *Jordan*, *Abraham* took the Mountains of *Palestine*, afterward call'd the *Amorite* Mountains, when the *Canaanites* had settled there. Upon these Mountains *Abraham* taking a View of the whole Country, East, West, North and South, God promised it all to him, and his Seed, as an everlasting Inheritance. And he could now see the whole Country, from *Zidon* to *Sin*, or the River of *Egypt*, North and South; and from *Jordan* to the *Mediterranean*, East and West. And the Lord said to *Abraham*, after *Lot* was departed from him, Lift up thy Eyes now, and look from the Place where thou art, Northward and Southward, and Eastward and Westward; for all the Land which thou seest will I give unto thee, and thy Seed for ever. Arise, walk through the Land in the Length thereof, and Breadth thereof, for I will give it thee, Gen. xiii. 14, 15, 17. The Bounds and Limits of this Country are described, Gen. x. 19. And there, and in all

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other Places, where the Country is described, and its Places and Borders mentioned, it included the Plains of *Philistia*, and the northern Mountains of *Zidonia*, *Libanus*, and *Anti-Libanus*, as well as the inland, eastern Mountains and Plains of *Jordan*, which the *Israelites* only conquered and possessed themselves of, which was not much more than half the Country. *David*, indeed, above four hundred Years after the Expiration of this Promise, conquered the inland Plains of *Canaan*; but he could never subdue, or possess himself of the Plains of the Sea-Coasts, *Philistia* and *Zidonia*, which contain'd at least a third Part of *Palestine* or *Canaan*, as described in Scripture, and as still drawn and divided into twelve Provinces, or Tribes, in our common Maps. And tho' *Joshua* divided this whole Country by Lots, upon a Presumption that God would soon make good his Promise, and perform his Oath, yet this People were never in Possession of above two Thirds of it, even in *David's* Time, and when the Extent of their Conquests was greatest.

Having thus related, and laid before the Reader the plain Matter of Fact, from first to last, I shall now consider the Author's Proof, that this Promise and Oath was punctually made good to them, and that this was the divine Right upon which *Moses* acted, and which justified the Conquest. But if he can prove this, I shall never pretend to dispute

dispute with him, or prove any Thing against him more.

I had urged, that the *Abrahamic* Covenant was a Covenant of Peace, Righteousness, of Faith, and true filial Obedience; and that as often as God promises this *whole Land* to *Abraham's* Seed, as an everlasting, safe Inheritance and Possession, it is commanded and supposed, that *Abraham's* Seed should, and would continue in the same Faith, Worship, and filial Obedience, as *Abraham* had done. And there I supposed, that this Covenant of Promise was conditional, and then the People could have claimed no Right from any such Grant in the Days of *Moses*, and, consequently, that this Politician brought in this only as a Pretence to justify the most bloody and unnatural Enterprize that ever had been projected; an Undertaking contrary to the *Abrahamic* Covenant of Righteousness, and all Truth or Righteousness in the World. But the Author saith, p. 155. "All that was promised in the Covenant made with *Abraham*, was, that his Seed should have the Land of *Canaan* for a Possession. The particular Manner in which they were to be put in Possession of it, is not told. But the Reason why they were not to possess the Land, till after four hundred Years, is declared to be this, that the Iniquities of the *Amorites* were not yet full, *Gen. xv. 16.*" But how often must this Writer be told, that this supposed Promise,

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mise, or Oath, never was performed, or made good at all, from first to last? God had promised them the whole Country, or Land, in which *Abraham* had sojourned. And *Abraham* had travelled from Place to Place, and dwelt and sojourned in all Parts of the Land while he was there, which had been all promised and sworn to him, and his Seed. But the *Amorite* Mountains, which *Joshua* and the Elders, and Judges after him conquered, were not the Land of *Canaan*, nor scarce the major Part of it. Nay, they did not make an intire Conquest of the *Amorite* Mountains, for the *Jebusites* still held out *Jerusalem*, the chief City, till *David's* Time; and the other Tribes of the *Canaanites* retained many Towns and Settlements, even upon those Mountains. And to call this the *Land of Canaan*, and a Conquest of the Land, is as absurd as it would be to call our southern and inland Counties, exclusive of *Wales*, and all the Northern Counties beyond the *Humber*, the *Land of England*. Let this Promise then have been absolute, or conditional, it was never made good; and, therefore, if the Author will have it to be *absolute*, he must make God himself a Liar. But if it was *conditional*, *Moses* was an Impostor. And I shall leave him here to take his Choice; for both, I believe, he cannot avoid.

As to the Text he quotes, *Gen. xv. 16.* That they were not to be put into the Possession

sion of *Canaan* till after four hundred Years, because the Iniquities of the *Amorites* were not yet full, it happens to be a little unlucky for him. For the *Amorites*, or several Tribes of the *Canaanite* Mountaineers, were not then in the Land, when this Promise was made to *Abraham*, though they were there in the Days of *Moses*. And, therefore, though this might serve as a Pretence to *Moses*, for destroying the *Amorites*, and taking Possession of their Lands and Properties, it could not be God's Reason, why he did not put *Abraham*, and his Family, into the present Possession of the Land. It does not appear, that there were any Idolaters in that Country, while *Abraham* was there. *Abimelech*, King of the *Philistines*, on the South Coasts of *Palestine*, with whom *Abraham* sometimes sojourned, and with whom he was in Alliance, is represented as a Man fearing God, and very cautious of offending him. And so were his Successors, the *Abimelechs*, in *Isaac's* Time. The inland, mountainous Parts of the Country, were then, in a Manner, desert and uninhabited, and lay all open to *Abraham* and *Lot*. And this Part of the Country not having been yet tilled and cultivated, nor scarce any Wells dug, or Conveniences for Water, made it very subject to Dearth and Scarcity, which often drove the Patriarchs into the Plains among the *Philistines*. Nor was this Country call'd *Canaan* then,

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then, but *Palestine* or *Philistia*, from the *Philistines*, who first took Possession of it. *Moses* might call it *Canaan*, because the *Canaanites*, whom he intended to destroy and drive out, had been then settled there, and had well peopled and cultivated the Country. But this Settlement of theirs, in that Part of the World, had not, probably, been long before the Birth of *Moses*. In short, there were no such People in that Country, as the *Amorites*, or *Canaanite* Mountaineers in *Abraham's* Time, nor for a long Time after; and, therefore, this Pretence of not driving them out then, because their Iniquities were not yet full, must have been a Forgery, or Interpolation of later Ages.

This is a full, and, I think, unanswerable Reply to every Thing the Author has offered upon this most important Point, and chief Part of the Controversy, with Respect to the divine Authority of *Moses* in his projected Conquest. But because he has some other feeble Shifts and Evasions, I shall just take Notice of them, lest he should complain again of my Oversight. I had observed, that *Abraham* and the Patriarchs might easily have possessed themselves of *Canaan*, had they thought fit to attempt a Conquest before they went down to *Egypt*, as they might at any Time after, while they maintained their Power and Interest. But, it seems, as God had assured *Abraham*, that they should not possess

possess the *Land* till the End of four hundred Years, they were willing and content to wait the *promised Time*. They would not then possess themselves of this Land, while they might easily have done it; but they waited God's Time, till they could not do it, and till they could no longer maintain a peaceable Settlement in *Egypt*. He pretends too, that God did not *absolutely promise* them the Possession of the *whole Land*, at the End of four hundred Years, but only that they should be then brought to the Land, and begin their Settlement there. But even this partial Promise was never accomplished; for it was forty Years after the four hundred were expired, before they could set a Foot in *Canaan*, or gain any Settlement at all there. Nor is there any such Promise of Part of the Land, but wherever the Land is promised at all, it is the whole Land, East, West, North and South, in which *Abraham* had sojourned. He pretends likewise to have given the true Reason, why the *Israelites* did not drive the *Canaanites* out of the Valleys, and will have it, that it was not because they could not, but rather because they would not; for he thinks there could have been no other Reason.

I had argued, that six hundred thousand Men, between twenty and sixty, besides Women and Children, must have amounted to at least between three and four Millions. And while Men had so many Wives and Concubines,

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bines, and Children by them all, it might have amounted to more than double the Number. And it was wonderful to me, that such a vast Multitude should not be enough to people a Country not a fourth Part so big as *England*, and, indeed, not a seventh, with Respect to that Part of the Country which the *Israelites* now conquered and possessed. And that this vast, incredible Multitude should have too much Room in a Spot scarce bigger than *Wales*, without endangering the Multiplying the Beasts of the Field against them, I thought perfectly miraculous. But the Author has a ready Answer to this at his Fingers Ends; for saith he, *p.* 157. “ But it happens, “ that in this Passage, where those Words “ are to be found, which the Author here “ refers to, the Land assigned to the *Israelites*, and which was to be delivered “ into their Hands, was of a vastly larger “ Extent than all *England*; for it is represented as reaching from *the Red Sea* “ even unto the Sea of the Philistines, and “ from the Desert unto the River Euphrates; “ all this was comprehended in the Grant, “ though not fully possessed, till the Time of “ of *David* and *Solomon*. And with Regard “ to the Land of *Canaan*, properly so called, “ it must be considered, that it was a hilly “ Country, and such a Country has more “ Room in it, than a plain Country of the “ same Extent.” But what does this whim-

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fical Author mean? The Passage I referr'd to, was that in *Exod. xxiii. 29, 30.* And 'tis evident, that this whole Chapter throughout relates to the *Canaanites* only, whom God was about to drive out before them, and to give them the present Possession of some Part of their Country, as much as they could then possess. But he would not drive out these *Canaanites all at once, lest the Land should become desolate, and the Beasts of the Field multiply against them, Ver. 29.* In the next *Verse*, the whole Extent of this Country is described in its Breadth and Length. It was to extend in Breadth, or from East to West, from the *Red Sea* to the Sea of the *Philistines*, or the *Mediterranean*; and in Length, from the Desert of *Arabia*, which they were to pass through, to the *River*. Now we must look for this River some where Northward, to know the Length of the Country; for its Breadth, from East to West, had been settled before. And this River could be none but the *Casimere*, or *Letane*, which rising in *Syria*, ran through all *Phœnicia*, or *Zidonia*, and emptied itself into the *Mediterranean*, between *Tyre* and *Zidon*. And Eastward, where it enters the Country, it bounds the whole Length of it, from thence to the Desert of *Arabia*, which bounds on the South towards *Egypt*. This is perfectly agreeable to the Description and Boundaries of *Canaan* in *Genesis*, and is evident from many other Places and

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and Passages compared, where its chief Towns and Cities are mentioned. But our Author's measuring from the *Mediterranean* to the *Red Sea*, and from the Desert to the *Euphrates*, is still going the same Way, from West to East, which would be making two Breadths, without any Length, or two Lengths, without Breadth, and cannot mark out and design any Country at all. But, I suppose, his Meaning was, that *David* conquered all *Arabia Petrea*, and *Syria*, and hereby made good the Promise to *Abraham*, and his Seed. But there is not one Word in the Passage here refer'd to, nor in any of the Books of *Moses*, of any Nation, or Country, which the *Israelites* were to drive out, and take their Possessions, but the *Canaanites* only. And 'tis certain in Fact, that they never did drive out any other People, or take Possession of any other Country, but *Canaan*. They lived there all together, till they were taken, and carried into Captivity, first by the *Assyrians*, and afterward by the *Babylonians*. *David*, indeed, over-run and ravaged a great Part of *Arabia* and *Syria*. He cannot, properly, be said to have conquered them, though he committed great Ravages and Devastations; it could not, I say, be properly called a *Conquest*, unless he had dethroned their Kings, and annexed their Dominions to his own Crown, which he did not. And as for those few adjacent Towns in *Arabia* and *Syria*, which he took and

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garison'd, they were held but a very little while, and were almost as soon lost as got; for when *Solomon* came to the Crown, they all revolted, and set up their own Kings again, and *Solomon* never struck a Blow, either to hold or regain them. These Countries, therefore, could never have been given, in any Sense, or at any Time, to the Seed of *Abraham*, as their Inheritance and Possession, and, consequently, could make no Part of God's Promise and Grant to that Patriarch.

But the Author here has one very shrewd Remark; for he tells us, that *Canaan* being a *hilly Country*, must contain more Room than a plain Country of the same Extent. But, perhaps, not; for this is not very clear; for it cannot be supposed, that the People should build Towns and Cities upon the Sides and steep Ascents of the Rocks; and the Mountains being narrower above, than below, they must rather take up Room, than make more. A mountainous, hilly Country, is never known to be more populous, than a champain one. The *Dutch* Provinces, which lie all upon a Flat, are the most inhabited of any Part of *Europe*: The mountainous Parts of *Scotland* have but few People; and in *England* the flat, low Countries, are most populous. But our Author, to make Room for such a vast Multitude in so small a Spot, ought to have had his Hills two or three Miles high, and all inhabited, from Top to Bottom. But I

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am sorry to see this Writer driven to such poor Shifts, in maintaining Things which are as false in Fact, as they are contrary to Nature and Reason. However, I can assure him, that if he can convince me of being in an Error, I shall readily own it, and recant it, as openly and publickly as I have maintained it. And, therefore, I hope he will not yet give me up as quite desperate, but continue to use his best Endeavours to bring me over to the Truth.

The Author, in his fifth Chapter, attempts to justify and support his Scheme of Infallibility, and unerring Guidance, upon St. *Paul's* Authority. If he had not taken up, and run away with these two Words from St. *Paul*, viz. *Inspiration*, and *All-Scripture*, he could not have writ his Book; and if he should be driven out of his Supposition here, he must give up his whole Cause. He cannot here tell us what St. *Paul* means by *Inspiration*, or by *All-Scripture*; but he supposes, and begs it as a first Principle all along, that the Meaning of the Apostle, in this Place, must be, that all the Writings which the *Jews* had received as authentic Scripture, had been written under the infallible Direction, or unerring Guidance of the Holy Ghost; and that this Character of Infallibility must extend to, and affect all the Parts of those Writings, whether historical, chronological, prophetic, or moral. In this Way, the

the Truth of Scripture, and the Sanction of divine Authority, must depend on the Supposition of human Infallibility, or that the biblical Historians, in all their miscellaneous Writings and Compositions, were infallible, and under an unerring Guidance of the Spirit, whatever Subjects they were writing upon. But to suppose St. *Paul* to mean this, would be to make that Apostle assert and maintain a most notorious and convincing Falshood in *Fact*, and which is as capable of being proved as such, as any other obvious Falshood in *Fact* can be detected. But tho' this Writer may lay down such Falshoods in *Facts*, and take them as indisputable first Principles, I dare be accountable for St. *Paul*, that he never did; and I would not have our Author bring that great Apostle rashly under such a *Premunire*. Any Man of less Assurance than this Writer, would be asham'd to argue continually against an Adversary upon a Principle that is not agreed on, and that he cannot prove; or, which is more, dares not so much as to attempt the Proof of it. For he has said nothing in Proof of this, but by supposing an Authority, which is the very Matter in Question, and Thing to be prov'd. If I should call upon him for the Proof of the Infallibility and unerring Guidance of the Prophets and Apostles, in all that they writ, and that they were not, or could not be mistaken in any Doctrinals, or *Facts*; he would tell me, no doubt, that he has this,

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and is in full Possession of it, by the common Law of *Prescription and uninterrupted Succession*. This has been always the stanch, strong Argument of the *Papists*, as borrowed from the *Jews*; and though this Writer may call himself what he will, and join the Party he likes best, yet I, and others, must judge of him by his profess'd and avow'd Principles. He does not know, perhaps, that there is any such Thing as Protestant Popery, Presumption, and Implicitism; and, I believe, he has himself given the World a most undoubted Proof of it.

I had shew'd, that the Apostles were so far from being infallible, or under any unerring Guidance in every Thing they believ'd and taught, that they were greatly divided among themselves about the continued Authority of the Law, and the most necessary and essential Points of Communion and Church Government, as Things stood at that Time. The Apostles of the Circumcision, of whom *Peter* was the Chief, made a Schism against *St. Paul*, and separated from him with all their Adherents, as granting too much Liberty to the *Gentiles*, and taking an illegal Liberty himself of eating and drinking, and familiarly conversing with them, while they were yet in their Heathen State; and they charged him with preaching a new and strange Gospel concerning the Abrogation of the Law, and the Equality of *Jews* and *Gentiles* in Christ's Kingdom, independent of the Law,

Law, either in Whole, or in Part. *St. Paul*, on the other Hand, stood to his own Gospel, or to the Doctrine of Christ, as he preach'd it, against the *Judaizers*. He insists upon it, that he had his Gospel by Revelation, and had been made an Apostle to the *Gentiles*, without ever concerting any Thing with them, or advising with them. And *St. Paul* claims and challenges to himself the *Apostleship of the Gentiles*, against *Peter*, and all the other Apostles of the Circumcision, who had no such *Authority*. This was the plain State of the Case in Fact. Now, surely, here could not be Infallibility, or any unerring Guidance on both Sides; and yet all wrought Miracles, and had all equally the Holy Ghost. Miracles, therefore, and Inspiration, did not prove Infallibility, and unerring Guidance, in those Days.

Thus we see they were not infallible even in Doctrinals; and as to historical Facts, they took them as they found them, and as they had been then commonly received among the *Jews*, without pretending to any infallible Direction, or Guidance, to amend, restore, or correct any Thing. It has been own'd, by most of the learned Critics, that the Copy of the *Septuagint*, then in vulgar Use among the *Jews*, was a very faulty and corrupt one. And yet the Apostles, whenever they quote from the *Greek Version*, refer to this vulgar, adulterated Copy, without any

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Emendations or Correction. And 'tis well known, that the Evangelists almost constantly made Use of this vulgar Copy. St. *Luke*, had he not used the vulgar, corrupt *Septuagint*, could never have placed *Cainan*, as an intermediate Generation between *Arphaxad* and *Sala*; for this *Cainan* is not to be found in any *Hebrew* Copy, nor is it inserted in the best and most correct Copies of the *Septuagint* still extant.

The Copy which St. *Paul* made Use of in settling the Time of the Judges, the Reign of *Samuel* and *Saul*, and the whole Period from the Exodus, to the Building of the Temple, differed widely from any Copies now in being. After the forty Years in the Wilderness, he assigns four hundred and fifty Years to the Judges, from the Entrance into *Canaan*, to the Death of *Eli*, and Beginning of *Samuel's* Government, which makes four hundred and ninety Years, from the Exodus, to this Time. During this Period or Interval, there had been but seven High Priests in continual Succession, inclusive of *Aaron* and *Eli*: And this Succession having been always from the eldest Sons, cannot be allow'd, in the common Course of Nature, to have been more than thirty Years, one with another; the common Age of Man being the same then, as now; especially if we consider, that the three or four first of these High Priests must have been very old, before they

they came to the Government. But according to *St. Paul's* Copy and Computation, each of these Priests must have reigned seventy Years, one with another, though they were old when they came to the Office; and the greatest Age recorded, during this Interval, after *Joshua*, is only ninety eight, which was the Age of *Eli* when he died, and he was then superannuated, and incapable of Government. This Computation, therefore, so much exceeding all Bounds in the common Course of Nature, cannot be admitted. Our present Copies from the *Hebrew* make the whole Interval, from the Exodus, to *Solomon's* Temple, but four hundred eighty Years; whereas, according to this corrupt Copy and Computation of *St. Paul's*, it must have been at least five hundred ninety. This last, indeed, agrees with *Josephus's* Account; and, therefore, 'tis probable *Josephus* and *St. Paul* might make Use of the same Copy, Version, and Edition of the Book of *Judges*. Our present *Septuagint* makes the Time, from the Exodus, to the Building the Temple, but four hundred forty Years, which lowest Computation must be much too high for the Successions of the High Priests during that Time, in which Reckonings the *Jews* were most exact.

David was born but thirty Years before the Death *Saul*, for that was his Age when he was first made King. *Salmon* begat *Boaz*

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of *Rahab*, whom he married about the Time of the *Palestine* Conquest. *Boaz* begat *Obed*, *Obed* begat *Jesse*, and *Jesse* begat *David* the King. But from the *Palestine* Conquest, to the Birth of *David*, according to *Josephus* and *St. Paul*, must have been four hundred eighty Years; and, therefore, *Boaz*, *Obed*, and *Jesse*, must have got Children, one with another, at the Age of one hundred sixty; according to our present Copies, at the Age of one hundred twenty two; and by the present *Septuagint*, at about one hundred and nine: All which, even the lowest, are too high to be admitted in the Course of Nature.

But this Book of *Judges* has perplexed and confounded all Chronology. No two learned Men, who have endeavoured to settle it for themselves, could ever agree about it. It observes no Order of Time, but generally relates and represents Things in Succession, which were coincident. After the Death of *Othniel*, 'tis most probable, that they had always two Judges and two Armies kept up at once, as they were continually liable to be attack'd, and broke in upon by the *Ammonites* and *Zidonians* in the North, and by the *Moabites*, *Philistines*, and *Canaanites* of the Plains, in the South; and, therefore, we find some of their Judges resided in the North, and others in the South Parts of the Country. And 'tis plain, from the Book itself, that *Eli*, who is said to have judged *Israel* forty Years,

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Years, must have been co-temporary with *Elon*, *Abdon*, and *Sampson*; for *Eli* never was a military Judge, or General among them. *Elon*, *Abdon*, and *Sampson*, judged or governed in the military Way thirty eight Years; and, therefore, *Eli* must have been High Priest for the two last Years of *Ibzan*. But it is not my Business now to settle what might be probable in this Case, which would require a distinct Treatise. What has been said, is enough to shew the great Confusion of the Book, and that it could not have been written under an extraordinary Guidance or Direction; and that the Apostles had no particular Inspiration, or Revelation from God, which might enable them to correct the Errors and Blunders of their antient Historians. It would require a Book written on that Subject alone, to consider all the gross and palpable Errors and Inconsistencies of these antient *Hebrew* Historians, especially in the Books of *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Esther*, and *Daniel*. But I shall spare myself the Trouble now, and wait for a farther Call from our strong believing Author.

The Author, in this Chapter, takes a great deal of Pains to make his Reader believe, that I had produced and urged *St. Paul's* Authority inconsistently, and contradicted myself in it. But here he has only shuffled off the Argument, and suppressed what I had really offered, and then charged me with
Incon-

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Inconsistency and Self-Contradiction. But a few Words will suffice to clear up this Matter, and set the Reader right, however the Author may shift and shuffle.

I had distinguished between the Obligation of this Law, considered as a national, civil Law, or System of mere human Policy; and considered as a divine Institution, or System of Religion, or direct Obedience to God. And every one must see, that these two Obligations would be perfectly and essentially different, as much as obeying God, and obeying Man. In the one Case, the *Jews* could have been under no other Obligation to their Law, than the *Greeks*, *Romans*, and all other Nations were to their Civil Laws and Constitutions; and, in this Case, the *Jews* might have altered their Constitution, and reformed what was amiss in it, as well as any other Nation: But in the other Case, supposing it to be a divine Institution, the Law of *Moses*, especially relating to their Priesthood, Sacrifices, and Propitiations, must have been the Religion of the *Jews*, or the Method which God had appointed for his own immediate Worship; and, in this Sense, or under such a Notion of it, the whole Nation, and even all the Apostles, Elders, and Brethren of the Circumcision, received and obeyed it. And, in this Sense, St. Paul himself had received and submitted to it in the Days of his Ignorance, and till he came to be better enlightened.

ened. But when the Light of the Gospel had discovered more clearly the Nature of true Religion, and that inward spiritual Worship which God alone could accept and reward, *St. Paul* was now as fully and thoroughly convinced, that there could have been nothing of Religion or divine Authority in that blinding, enslaving, carnal Constitution, which they had received and submitted to as the true Worship of God. He had been brought out of Darkneſs into Light, and from a State of wretched Bondage, and carnal Subjection, to the *glorious Liberty of the Sons of God*. He might well call this a new Revelation, and labour to bring his Country-men to the ſame Conſideration, and juſt Senſe of Things. But their Law had too much blinded and enslaved them; they could not open their Eyes, to ſee the cleareſt Day-light, or Sun-ſhine; and under this Darkneſs and Servitude to the ritual Law, the whole Circumciſion continued, till God by his Providence had utterly deſtroyed and extirpated their Temple, Prieſthood, and Sacrifices. Here then we may ſee what it was, that *St. Paul* declared againſt, and endeavoured to reform: It was the religious Obligation of that Law in Point of Conſcience and divine Worſhip; and in this Senſe he denies it to be binding, either to *Jew* or *Gentile*; and that it could not be thus binding, he proves from the Nature and Tendency of the Thing itſelf, which Argument

gument must always have had the same Force and Consequence as then, had there been the same Light and Discovery made about it. But that God, by an express Testimony or Declaration to *St. Paul*, or by a Revelation in the Author's Sense, had dissolved the religious Obligation of this Law, when it had been thus binding, as a divine Institution before; this is what that Apostle never said; and 'tis impossible, from what he has said of it, that ever he should have thought so after his Illumination and Conversion: This I have so often urged upon the Author, without being able to bring him to the Point, till I am quite weary of repeating it. But, in the mean while, *St. Paul* did not forbid the *Jews* submitting to the Law, in the civil, national, and human Sense. Under this Respect and Consideration he occasionally submitted to it himself; but yet, even in this Sense, he would not have it imposed on the *Gentiles*. This is the Sum and Substance of all that I had said about it, in which, if the Author can find any Inconsistency, or Self-Contradiction, I shall readily be accountable for it.

If this Author understands *St. Paul* right, he must have been one of the most inconsistent, self-contradictory Writers in the World: He must have maintained, that this ritual Law, or *Law of Ordinances*, was a carnal, worldly, blinding, and enslaving Constitution, and State of Things, in its own Nature and Tendency;

dency ; that in itself, according to the Letter, or in its literal Sense, it was dead, unprofitable, and never true, nor good ; that it had always kept those who had been under it, in a wretched State of Darkneſs and Bondage, ſubject to the Devil, and their own Luſts ; and under this miſerable Vaſſalage it could afford them no Help : And yet, at the ſame Time, according to our learned Author, *St. Paul* muſt have maintained, that this very Conſtitution had been immediately inſtituted and ordained by God himſelf, under the Sanction of divine Authority, for *very wiſe and good Ends*. This is the groſs Abſurdity and Contradiction which he would put upon that great Apoſtle, and from which, in his Way, he can never be able to clear him. He is much at a Loſs for any of thoſe wiſe and good Ends, which either were, or could have been answered by ſuch a Law ; and what he has hitherto offered, or hinted at to this Purpoſe, has been ſo extreamly trifling, and ſo often refuted, that I need ſay no more of it : But 'tis plain enough, that this never entered into *St. Paul's* Senſe or Deſign, and has no Key at all to his Writings.

St. Paul muſt argue againſt the *Jews* upon their own Principles, and take them in their own Way, or not at all. Had he expreſſy and directly denied the divine Authority of their Law, inſtead of hearkening to his Arguments, they would have ſtoned him ; but I know

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know not how he could have denied this Authority by a plainer Consequence, than by shewing its evil Nature and Tendency, and by rejecting it as killing and destructive *according to the Letter*, or in the literal Sense, when *Moses* had given it, and the People received it in no other Sense. But the Author, it seems, cannot conceive how this Apostle could *suppose* a Thing in Argument, without *believing*, or granting it; though this Supposition made his Argument the stronger against the *Jews*, and was the only Way in which he could have dealt with them; for if their ceremonial Law had been ever so much of divine Institution, yet they were now obliged to receive a clear Light, and submit to the Truth; to lay aside their Enmity and Separation from the *Gentiles*, to embrace the Gospel, as this Apostle had preached it, and to worship God in that pure, spiritual Way, which he had directed: And this Obligation must have been evident to any Man's Understanding and Reason, who would but open his Eyes, and allow himself any cool, sober Thought and Reflexion. But if God, by any express Testimony and Declaration to *St. Paul*, had revoked or repealed this Part of the Law, as having been of divine Institution, it is wonderful, that the Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision should know nothing of it, and should not have had the same Revelation, who were the chief, if not the only Persons

Persons concerned! But this Difficulty the Author prudently slips over, and leaves as he finds it. He must seem to say something, but he takes great Care never to touch where the Argument pinches; and when he has thus slipped himself out, he comes off triumphantly, and blames me for rambling and writing in an unargumentative Way. But without rambling, it is very plain, that the Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision, from first to last, kept to the whole Law, and had no Notion of their Priesthood and Sacrifices being abrogated and done away by the Death of Christ. This Abrogation of the ceremonial Law, or the Law relating to the *Mosaic* Priesthood and Sacrifices, continued a Secret to the Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision at least thirty Years, or as long as we have any scriptural, authentic Account of them: And yet they preached all along the *same Gospel* with St. Paul, though St. Paul expressly declares, that he had received his *own Gospel* by *Revelation*, without advising with, or concerting any Thing with these *Christian Jews*. But 'tis high Time to relieve the Author from this Stress of the Argument, and to wait for his farther Elucidations upon it.

The Author had declared, that "The legal Sacrifices sanctify'd to the purifying of the *Flesh*, and that this external Atone-ment is what *Moses* intends as the immediate

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“ diate Consequence of the Priest’s sprinkling
 “ the Blood.” But I could not, for my Life,
 understand or make any Sense of this *external, legal Purification and Atonement, where
 no Sin had been committed, [remitted] for
 which the Law required the Sacrifice, and no
 Sin could be pardoned, or done away by it.*
 These are my Words, only he has changed
committed for remitted, which is a Matter of
 no Consequence, and might be a Mistake of
 the Author’s Printer, or mine. But the Ar-
 gument is plainly this: Under the Law there
 was no Remission, or Pardon, of any legal
 Offence whatever; where the Law had
 provided any Punishment for an Offence
 against it, that Punishment, in Case of
 Disobedience, must be inflicted; or if a Sa-
 crifice, as a Fine or Deodand, had been en-
 joined by the Law, for the Churching of a
 Woman at her first appearing Abroad after
 Child-bearing, for the Cleansing of a Leper,
 or any other legal Purification; this Sacrifice,
 Fine, or Deodand, must be given or paid in
 according to Law, and there could be no *Re-
 mission*. Now I said, that I could not un-
 derstand, what *Propitiation* or *Atonement* could
 signify under a Law, where there could be no
 such Thing as *Pardon*, or Remission, in any
 Case whatever. I concluded from hence;
 that this Propitiation, or Atonement, must
 have been merely *nominal*, and could not have
 been *real* in any Sense at all. This, indeed,
 I faith

saith he, *p.* 179. "Is absolute and direct
 " Nonsense, to talk of a legal Atonement for
 " Sin, where no Sin had been committed a-
 " gainst the Law, and no Pardon could be
 " obtained by it. But then the Nonsense is
 " his own, and he may take the Credit of it.
 " This external, legal Purification and Atone-
 " ment for Sin, did suppose, that a Sin had
 " really been committed, for which the Law
 " required the Sacrifice, and that the Sin, or
 " Fault, was done away, or pardoned, in
 " the Eye of the Law: And this is what
 " the Apostle calls *Sanctifying, to the Purify-*
 " *ing of the Flesh*, i. e. a Person was upon
 " offering the Sacrifice outwardly sanctified
 " or cleansed; he was clear in the Eye of
 " the Law, from the Guilt he had con-
 " tracted." But does not every Man stand
 acquitted in Law, when he has paid the
 Fine, or suffered the Penalty, which the Law
 required? Or is here any Thing of Pardon
 or Forgiveness in this? Or if no Pardon or
 Remission, but the Law has been satisfy'd by
 Obedience, where is the Atonement or Pro-
 pitiation? But let us hear the Author out up-
 on it, because it is a notable Sample of *School-*
Play. "When, therefore, he goes on wise-
 " ly to ask, *Was legal Sin no Sin, and legal*
 " *Forgiveness no Pardon or Remission of Sin at*
 " *all?* I answer, legal Sin, was a Sin or Fault
 " committed against the Law; and legal
 " Forgiveness, was a Pardon or Remission
 S " of

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“ of that Sin in the Eye of the Law, and
 “ whereby a Person was set legally clear
 “ and free.” But is not every Man, without any Thing of *Pardon* or *Forgiveness*, legally free, when he has paid his Fine, or discharged his Debt, as the Law required? I think, when the Fine is paid, the Debt discharged, or the Penalty suffered, according to Law, every Law must be satisfied, and here can be no Pretence of Propitiation, Pardon, or Forgiveness, unless Obedience should be *Propitiation*, and suffering the Penalty *Forgiveness*. He goes on, “ But he
 “ cannot conceive what Sin could be forgiven,
 “ or atoned for, by a Man’s offering a Sacrifice in a legal Way, unless it was the Sin of
 “ not offering it, which would have been punished with Death for any wilful, presumptuous Refusal.” I must profess, that I am still under the same Ignorance and Confusion; for I cannot conceive, how Obedience to the Law, in offering a Sacrifice, or paying a Fine which the Law required, should be *Propitiation*, or *Pardon*. But let us attend the Author a little, and, no doubt, but he will soon clear it up. For this, saith he, p. 180, is completely absurd. “ Let us suppose
 “ a Man had committed a Sin, or Fault, for
 “ which the Law required a Sacrifice, and
 “ doing what the Law required, it was declared, that his Sin was forgiven him: The
 “ Question is, What was forgiven him?

" Any Man of common Understanding would
 " take it, that it must be the Sin, on the Ac-
 " count of which he offered the Sacrifice,
 " which was no longer to be charged upon
 " him, nor was he to be obnoxious to any
 " Penalty on the Account of it." This is,
 surely, admirable. Suppose a Man, on some
 Account or other, had forfeited an Ox, a
 Calf, or a Sheep, which the Law required to
 be given, or paid in, on such an Occasion.
 Well, he obeys the Law in this Case, and
 then he is told, that the Law being now sa-
 tisfied, has nothing farther to demand, and,
 consequently, that he is hereby pardoned, or
 acquitted, in Law. This is the Author's very
 Case, and all that he can make of it; that
 paying a Fine, or discharging a Debt due in
 Law, is *legal Pardon*. But if he would make
 out any Thing of Satisfaction, which supposes
 Pardon or Forgiveness, he must give some In-
 stance or other, in which a Man might be
 excused from any legal Obedience, or any
 Punishment in Law could be remitted by Sa-
 crifice. But to talk of Pardon by Sacrifice,
 when the Sacrifice itself was the Fine or
 Thing charged for the Offence, is the same
 Absurdity, as if he was to say, that a Man
 is pardoned, acquitted, or forgiven in Law,
 as soon as he has discharged the Obligation,
 or submitted to the Penalty, which the Law
 required; which is plainly nothing else, but
 forgiving a Debt after it is paid, or on Con-

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dition of punctual Payment; and this is our Author's legal Propitiation and Pardon. And now, I think, I may leave it to the Reader, whether this is the Author's Absurdity, or mine; or whether he is not maintaining a very absurd and unintelligible Law.

As to the Argument from Types, Allegories, and Resemblances, I need say no more of it. In this Way any Consequences may be drawn from any Premises, according to every Man's own Fancy, or Imagination. 'Tis no Wonder, that Christ and the Apostles should argue against the *Jewish* Doctors in this Way, since they themselves had been infinitely fond of it, and written many large, elaborate Volumes upon the mystical, typical Sense of *Moses* and the Prophets. Such Consequences, therefore, were good against them, *ad hominem*, and taking them in their own Way, though they could really prove nothing *ad judicium*, on one Side or the other. The Argument or Authority which Christ himself brings from *Moses*, to prove against the *Sadducees* a Resurrection of the Body, if it proves any Thing to the Purpose, must prove, that *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jaakob*, were not dead, but living, in the Days of *Moses*; for God was then their God, but he was not the God of the Dead, but of the Living; therefore those Patriarchs were then risen from the Dead: But all that could have been prov'd from this Testimony from *Moses* against the
Sadducees,

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Sadducees, was, that those Patriarchs were still existing, and capable of Happiness in a separate State; but they might have for ever existed, and been capable of Happiness in a separate State, without any Resurrection of the Body, which was the Thing here to be proved. But, indeed, the plain Sense of the Text in *Moses* could be no more than this, that Jehovah, who now appeared to *Moses*, was the same God whom *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jaakob* had worshiped and served, and who had blessed and protected them in their Days. Thus *St. Paul* proves, that the Seed or Offspring of *Abraham*, to whom the Promise was made, must be mystically understood of Christ and his spiritual Seed, because it was not spoken of *Seeds* or Offsprings, *as of many, but of Seed, as of one, which is Christ*. This might be a good Argument *ad hominem*, to such mystical Believers as the *Jewish* Rabbins; but the rational, or literal Consequence, seems to be very obscure: And yet *Moses* and the Prophets could not have been otherwise quoted for a new Dispensation, in which no temporal Power or Dominion was to be concerned, or expected; and, therefore, such Arguments drawn from *Moses* and the Prophets, must have appeared very weak and inconsequent to the *Jews*.

As to *St. Paul's* being the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, it is but a very modern Opinion, and depends upon no original,

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authentic Testimony: And no Man can have any Right or Reason to father it upon that Apostle, without his own Authority, or any other authentic Proof. 'Tis well known, that this Epistle had never been received, or taken into the Canon at all by the Western or *Latin* Church in *Jerom's* Time, which was the latter End of the fourth Century; nor is it to be found in any of the most antient Collections of the canonical Books: Its Authority, therefore, as an original, canonical Book, is not very clear, or indisputable.

But the Author of this Epistle, as himself testifies, was a *Hebrew*, and had exercised his Ministry and Labours in the *Hebrew* Church among the *Jerusalem* Christians; and he earnestly desired, at this Time, when in *Italy*, to be restored to them again, and begs their Prayers to this Purpose, *Heb. xiii. 19.* But this could not be *St. Paul*, who had never laboured or ministred among the *Hebrews*, and whose Labours and Ministry had been confined wholly to the *Greek* and *Gentile* Churches. Again, this Epistle was wrote after *Timothy* had been imprisoned at *Rome*, and was then set at Liberty, *Verse 23.* But this could not have been in *St. Paul's* Time, nor while *Nero* reigned, nor within a Twelve-month afterward; for all this Time the Persecution continued, and no Christians had been enlarged, or set at Liberty. But after the *Jewish* War was ended, the Troubles and
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Commutations of the Empire pacify'd, and *Vespasian* was peaceably settled on the Throne, and declared Emperor by the Senate; he gave Liberty to the Christians, and released such as he found under Bonds and Imprisonment. The *Hebrew Church of Jerusalem*, who during the Wars and Commotions of the Empire, had been driven out and dispersed through the several Provinces of the Lesser *Asia*, and in *Syria*, *Arabia*, and *Egypt*, where *St. Paul* had planted Churches; were now suffered to return, and form themselves into a Church at *Jerusalem* again, under a Bishop of their own: And all this was not till the End of the War, the Destruction of the Temple, and the general Settlement and Tranquillity of the Empire. These, I think, are sufficient Indications, that this Epistle could not have been written till within three or four Years, at least, after *St. Paul's* Death; and, therefore, surely, not while the Temple was standing.

C H A P. IV.

HAVING thus, as I think, established the general Principles of the *Moral Philosopher*, against the weak Attempts of this Author, to overthrow and set them aside; I shall now have the less to do, and

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may make the shorter Work with him in what remains, with Regard to his Exceptions to the particular Instances I had produced to shew the human Policy and State-Craft of this whole Constitution. And here it will be evident all along, to any one who will lay aside Prejudice, and consider Things as they really are, that my Principle, or Supposition of human Policy and State-Craft, will clearly account for the most difficult and shocking Parts of this Law; whereas they must be absolutely and perfectly inconsistent with the contrary Supposition of a Theocracy, or divine Institution. He cannot talk consistent Sense upon any Part of this Argument, because he still goes upon a wrong Supposition.

Upon my having distinguished between the two different Capacities in which *Moses* acted, *scil.* as a *Law-giver*, or as a Prophet or *Preacher* of Righteousness; this sanguine, hasty Writer cries out, *p.* 187. "This is really granting the Point in Question; for it must be considered, that it was as a Prophet extraordinarily inspired of God, that *Moses* delivered his Law." Thus putting the Author's Supposition and mine together, that *Moses* gave the Law as a Politician and Craftsman, and as a Prophet or Preacher of Righteousness too, all will be clear, and the whole Point is granted. *It must be considered, that Moses delivered the Law as a Person extraordinarily inspired of God, to erect a sacred Polity.*

Polity. But by whom must this be considered? Why, by our Author, and those who are of his Mind; for others, surely, will not consider or believe it, and, I think, he has said but very little to make us believe it. If you will consider, and grant his Principles, he can prove any Thing in the World, or otherwise he must desire to be excused. All the Prophets, after *Moses*, were *Preachers of Righteousness*, and the Author supposes them to have been *extraordinarily inspired*; and yet they were not *Law-givers*: And, therefore, these two Capacities are very distinct and different, and the same Person may act in both. And I have proved, that this Law could take Cognizance of outward Actions only, and could not possibly extend to the inward Temper, Disposition, or Principle of Action. The Author offers nothing farther with Respect to this Law, but his own Supposition of its being a Theocracy, or divine Institution; the contrary to which, in my Opinion, has been evidently proved. He declares, *p.* 189. That I quite mistake the Sense of *St. Paul*, in supposing, that this Law could only relate to outward Actions, and could not reach the Heart and Conscience. But why have I mistaken *St. Paul* in this? Why, because *he declares, that the Law was holy, just, and good; and that it was spiritual, though Men are carnal.* And does not the same Apostle also declare, that the Law itself was *carnal*, and
in

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in its literal Sense, or *according to the Letter*, it was blinding, enslaving, and mortiferous, or killing? *The Letter killeth, but the Spirit quickneth. What Spirit?* Not, surely, the *carnal Law*, but the *Gospel*, which in this Apostle's allegorical Way of Reasoning with the *Jews*, was the *Spirit of the Law*; but this *Spirit* the Law could not obtain, nor provide or execute any Sanctions that might reach it. But this Writer must, no doubt, perfectly well understand St. Paul, when he is continually making the Apostle contradict himself, without taking Notice, as I had done, of the different Senses in which he uses the Word *Law*. This Apostle plainly distinguishes between the *Law written in Tables of Stone*, by which he means the Decalogue, or *moral Law*, and the *Law of Ordinances*, by which he understands the ritual, *ceremonial Law*; and both these he distinguishes from the *Law of Faith*, or Gospel of Christ, which directly relates to the inward Temper, Disposition, and Principle of Action, and is accordingly enforced with the Sanctions of eternal Life and Death. But this End, even the moral Law of *Moses*, could never obtain, nor could any of its Sanctions reach to it: And yet a political, civil Law, by enjoining the outward Practice of Virtue, and securing the external Peace, Safety, and good Order of Society, may be holy, just, and good. But St. Paul never speaks of this Law of Ordinances, as
holy,

holy, just, and good, but the quite contrary : And if this Law, which made a principal Part of the Law of *Moses*, was in its own Nature and Tendency, as the Apostle represents it, *blinding, enslaving, carnal, and killing*, I am sure it could not be the Law of God.

I had proved, that the Law indulged human Sacrifices, as free-will Offerings, and that any Man or Beast thus offered, as holy to the Lord, by the special Vow, must *die the Death*, or be made a Burnt-Offering: And as this is the express Declaration of the Law, so I had shewn, that we have a clear, undeniable Instance of this in *Jephtha's* Daughter, who was in Fact thus vow'd, and thus offer'd. And what our Author offers in Answer to this, *p. 202—206.* is so perfectly trifling and evasive, that I am willing to leave the Reader, from what has been said on both Sides, to judge for himself; and the Author must excuse me in not following him through every Shift and Turn, as often as he would lead me, and his Reader, out of the Way. He cannot believe, that the Case here should be such as it is expressly declared, and clearly represented to be, because this would be inconsistent with his supposed Theocracy, and divine Institution; but if he will suppose with me, that this Law was a mere Piece of human Policy and State-Craft, to advance the Power of their supream Lords the Priests, the Reason

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Reason of such an Indulgence, and the Use which might be made of it to such a Purpose, will be very clear, and can create no Difficulty at all.

I had urged, that the Redemption of the First-born must necessarily suppose and imply, that they must have been, otherwise, or had been reserved as holy to the Lord in the *sacrificial Sense*, as the First-born of the Beasts were, since both had been reserved as holy to the Lord, by the same Law, and in the same Terms: And that the very Notion and constant Use of the Word Redemption, or to redeem, must relate either to Life or Liberty, which Persons were redeemed or ransomed to, from Death or Slavery, to which they had been subject, or liable before. And that the Sense of the Law could not be, that the First-born of all the other Tribes were to be redeemed from the high Privileges, Exemptions, and Prerogatives of the *Levites*, to the Labour, Toil, and Dangers of *common Subjects*. This was the whole Force and Stress of my Argument; and as the Author has said nothing to it, but left it just as he found it, I shall leave it there too, till I hear from him again.

He next complains, *p.* 210. That I had taken no Notice at all of a great deal which he had urged in the Case of *Abraham's* offering up his Son. It is true, that I had not taken Notice of a great Part of his supposi-
tive

tive Declamation upon that Head, because I thought it nothing at all to the Purpose: But if he has now answered what I did take Notice of, it will be well enough; and then he may thank me for shortening the Argument. He saith, that God did not, for his own Information, try *Abraham* in this Way, to know what he would do in such a Case, "But it was to give *Abraham* an Opportunity of discovering to the World the excellent Temper of his Mind, and exhibiting a *lasting Example to all Ages.*" But a lasting Example of what? Why of the Efficacy and Acceptableness of human Sacrifices with God; for, surely, God would not command *Abraham*, as an Example to others, and to *all Ages*, to do a Thing which ought not to be done, as being contrary to Nature and Reason, as well as to the Perfections of God himself: But if it was a Thing so acceptable to God, and agreeable to his Nature and Perfections, to try *Abraham's* highest Faith and Obedience, how much more meritorious must it have been in those who actually did it in after Ages, as taking Example and Encouragement from *Abraham*, and thereby going farther than *Abraham* in the same Sort of Faith and Obedience? It will be said, no doubt, that what *Abraham* did was at the Command of God; but they who afterward offered human Sacrifices had no such Authority for it: But this is *gratis dictum*. They who offered hu-
man

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man Sacrifices, thought they had Reason for it, and that it would be highly acceptable and pleasing to God, since they could offer him nothing else of so great Value, or more precious to them; and this was *Abraham's* Faith and Persuasion. But that he had better Authority for it than others who actually did it, is the Thing in Question; for 'tis certain, that the Nature and Reason of the Thing itself is the same in both.

Our Author takes it for granted, that this Story is literally true, and to be taken according to our present Use of Language, and Acceptation of Words, as now current with us; and because it is said, in the *Hebrew* Way of speaking, that God appeared and spoke to *Abraham*, and commanded him so or so, he believes, that God did, in Reality, personally appear, and talk with *Abraham*, Mouth to Mouth, and with an audible Voice, as one Man would with another: But he might have known, that God, in those Days, and according to the *Hebrew* Idiom and Phraseology, appeared and spoke to Men more Ways than one. He often appeared, and spoke to them in their *Dreams*, or they dreamed, that God appeared and spoke to them, and directed them to act and conduct themselves in this or that Way: And when any such Dream had made a strong Impression on them, they interpreted it as the Voice and Will of God to them; and thus they under-

understood any remarkable or uncommon Incident of Providence towards them, as the Voice of God, and a Direction or Command from him. But that God did then really appear and converse with Men, and that they were almost as familiar with Angels as with one another, is a Thing not to be proved by a strict, literal Translation of one Language into another, against all Nature and Reason, and all the general Laws of Providence by which God governs the World. 'Tis very plain that *Abraham*, however he came by it, had a strong, indubitable Persuasion, that if he should sacrifice his Son, as God was able, so he would certainly raise him again from the Dead, and make good his Promise in him after he had been burnt to Ashes. But that God should actually and expressly command this, and then forbid it again, as the Story is literally told, is a Degree of Faith which every one cannot attain to; and, therefore, the Author ought rather to pity, than blame those poor, diminutive *Dwarfs* in Religion, who cannot reach to the Sublimities of his supernatural and divine *Faith*. *Abraham* finding a Ram accidentally tied in a Bush just by, as he was about to strike a Knife into his Son's Throat, might have a sudden Thought dart into his Mind, that this was immediately directed by Providence, and a Declaration from God to him, that he ought not to sacrifice the Child, but the Ram: And this might suddenly

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suddenly alter his Mind, how strong soever his Persuasion and Resolution had been before; and had this been so, the *Hebrew* Historian, according to the Phraseology of that Language, and the Notions then prevailing, would have said, that God had provided the Ram, and sent it thither by an Angel.

We have another Instance of the Author's School-Play, and Art of Evasion, in the Promise which God is supposed to have made to *Abraham*, that at the End of four hundred Years his Seed should inherit the Land of *Canaan*. The Author here, *p.* 212. would make his Reader believe, that I had said this Promise was not made good, because they at the End of these four hundred Years were not put into the Possession of the *whole Land*; but this is purely evasive. I had urged, that this Promise, or Prediction, was not made good at all, either in Whole, or in Part, at the Expiration of the four hundred Years; because it was forty after the four hundred were expired, before the *Israelites* could gain any Settlement at all, or set a Foot in *Canaan*. Besides, as often as the Land is promised, it is the whole Land, East, West, North, and South, so far as *Abraham* could see, or take a View, when he was upon the Mountains; and this Promise was never made good at all, even in *David's* Time, as I have proved. And now I must leave the Author to find out some other Shift or Evasion, and to

to prove, that *any Part of a Land* is that *Land*, that there is no Difference between the Whole and a Part, and that four hundred forty Years are not more than four hundred. No doubt, but *Moses*, when they went out of *Egypt*, might expect to have taken immediate Possession of the whole Land, and this he promised the People as from God, the four hundred Years being now just expired; but he was defeated in his Politics, and thereby, it seems, made God break his Promise.

The Author, in his seventh Chapter, *p.* 214. undertakes to answer what I had offered concerning the supream Power under the *Mosaic* Constitution, the Largeness of the Revenues due to the Priests and Tribe of *Levi* by this Law; the Burden of the Priesthood, as the Cause of their Revolt and Idolatry, and some other incidental Matters which I had charged upon that Law; and he promises, or undertakes to prove all this to be false, extravagant, and absurd. I must attend him in all this, for such is my Fate; but after what I have said already; my Labour here will not be infinite.

I had asserted and maintained, that the *Levites* had greater legal Privileges, Exemptions, and Immunities granted them, than any of the Princes or chief Men of the other Tribes. I had shewn, that this whole Tribe, from the highest to the lowest, were exempted by

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the Law from all Taxes and Payments in Law whatever, from all burdensome and expensive State-Offices, and from the Fatigue and Danger of bearing Arms, though it might be ever so necessary for the common Defence and Preservation of their Country. And I might here challenge this Writer to shew, or give an Instance of any one legal Privilege, Exemption, or Immunity, which any of the Princes, or chief Men of the other Tribes had, and which the poorest and meanest *Levite* had not. The Privileges and Immunities of the *Levites* were peculiar to that Tribe, and must have been intended as a distinguishing Honour and Advantage to that Tribe above the rest. As for the common and ordinary Administration of the Government in their inferior Courts of Judicature, and in their Sanhedrim, Parliament, or national Council, which was by the twelve hereditary Princes of the Tribes, and the elective Members, chosen five out of every other Tribe; this was not a legal Privilege, Exemption, or Immunity, but a very great Expence and Burden, for which they had no Recompence or Consideration at all, but the payless Honour of serving their Country; but from this Service, without Pay, the *Levites* were by Law exempted. But after all the Expence and Trouble of the Lay Rulers, the last Resort in Judgment was to the supreme Lord, or High Priest, and his Decision was to be sub-

submitted to on Pain of Death, *Deut. xvii.*
 12. If any Man under this Law would not
 obey the common Judge, or Order of Court,
 where the Judge had determined the Matter
 definitively, and without Appeal, he was to
 die for that Contempt. But the last Resort
 in Judgment, where the common Judges
 could not decide a difficult Case, was to the
Lord, or High Priest. What the Author has
 offered against any Thing of this, is rather
 Raving than Reasoning. Let the Reader see,
p. 114—117. He affirms, indeed, that the
 supream Power was first in *Moses*, then in
Joshua, and all along in the *Judges*, for the
 Time being. But that the last Appeal in
 Judgment by this Law was not to the su-
 pream Lord, or High Priest, this Author does
 not say, and, I presume, that where-ever this
 ultimate Appeal lay in Judgment, that must
 have been the supream Power. I had, in-
 deed, *pretended, that the People's throwing off*
the supream Power vested in the High Priest
by the Law of Moses, was a fundamental
Breach of the Constitution, and rejecting God
from being their King. But the Author assures
 us, *p. 117,* That it was not the chusing a
 King, and investing him with the supream
 Power, but throwing off the Judges, who
 had the supream Power before, which is re-
 presented as a fundamental Breach of the
 Constitution: But 'tis evidently false, and con-
 trary to the Text, that the throwing off the
 T 2 supream

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supream Power of the Judges was the Reason assigned for the Breach of the Constitution in rejecting *God as their King*, and chusing another King or Subject of supream Power. When *Samuel* was grown old, he had settled his Sons in the Government, and designed to have kept it in his own Family; but the Male-Administration of his Sons brought on a general Discontent, and a public Resolution to chuse a King, and place the supream Power in him, as in other Nations. *But the Thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a King to judge us, and Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hear the Voice of the People in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them,* 1 Sam. viii. 6, 7. *Samuel* was now High Priest, and had the supream Power of the Nation in his Hands. And the Competition is here plainly between *Samuel* and the King, whom they were to chuse, without one Word of the Judges. *Samuel* and all successive High Priests were now become Subjects; the supream Power and ultimate Resort in Judgment was to be now vested in a King, who would do just as he pleased, and might dethrone a High Priest as well as a chief Captain. The People had now rejected and cast off the priestly, supream Power, and, therefore, had rejected the *Lord*, or dethron'd God as their *King*. This was evidently the funda-

fundamental Breach of the Constitution, and after this the Nation was no longer a Theocracy, as the Prophet here declares. But our Author's Assurance in asserting the contrary, against the express Text, is very remarkable, and his Discovery, in this Case, ought to be placed to his own Account. *Samuel* was now very sensible, that the King would not long be governed by him, or take his prophetic and oracular Decision as the Voice of God; and the Event shewed, that he was not mistaken in this, when he came to be deposed from the high Priesthood, and the right, legal Heirs restored.

He next comes, *p.* 118. to refute and set aside a Computation which I had made, That the legal Revenues of the Priesthood, or Tribe of *Levi*, amounted to at least twenty Shillings a Head upon all the Lands, or a third Part of the whole Produce of the Lands. He had called this *a wild Assertion, and he thinks so still*; and I shall now examine the Reasons why he thinks so. I shall here distinctly consider what this Author, upon second Thoughts, has offered, in Abatement of my Computation, though he owns, that at first he thought an annual Rent to have been the whole Produce, or Value of the Lands, and that if the High Priests and Tribe of *Levi* had had that, they must have had all. But now he is better awake, and yet thinks my Calculation very absurd and extravagant:

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For saith he, *p.* 220, " First he supposes an
 " Estate in Land to be intirely under Tillage
 " or Vintage, so that the Corn and Fruits
 " upon it make up the entire Value or Profit
 " of the Lands, and one Tenth of that is
 " equivalent to three Tenths of annual Rents;
 " and then he supposes the same Land to be
 " stock'd with Cattle to the Value of two
 " annual Rents, so that two Tenths of the
 " Beasts upon it come to four Tenths of the
 " annual Rent; so that the very same Land
 " is, the same Year, both compleatly under
 " Tillage, and under Pasturage: And this
 " is the Supposition he makes concerning the
 " whole Country, which, without pretend-
 " ing to any extraordinary Skill in those Mat-
 " ters, one may venture to pronounce a very
 " great Absurdity." But the Author here,
 for want of a *little more Skill in these Mat-*
ters, is under a very great Mistake; for I did
 not suppose, that the same Land, at the same
 Time, might be Tillage and Pasturage too,
 though the same Land, in different Parts of
 the Year, may be both, as all know. But I
 supposed, that every Tenant of a Landed
 Estate, whether Arable or Pasture, must make
 three annual Rents, or else he could not bear
 the Charge of Cultivation, maintain his Fa-
 mily out of it, and pay his Rent too. And
 I supposed and proved, that the Tithes and
 Dues of one Sort or other under this Law,
 must have amounted to at least an annual

Rent upon all the Lands. And supposing the Calculation to hold good, with Respect to the Pasture Land, where the Sheep and Cattle are fed, the Computation will run much higher upon Arable Land, though it should not serve for Pasturage at any Time of the Year. It was the poorest of the Lands, and of the lowest annual Value, that were thrown to Arable, for Corn and Grain of all Sorts; and here the Profits to the spiritual Lords would be much greater in Proportion to the annual Rent or Value of the Lands, than upon Pasture Ground with all the Sheep and Cattle fed upon it. For one Tenth of the Produce in Corn and Grain, paid in neat, and free of all Labour, would be equivalent to two annual Rents upon the Land. We may reckon the Labour and Expence of Cultivation, Tillage, and fitting for Use, or bringing to Market, upon Arable Lands, at six annual Rents of such Land, which with the Rent makes seven; and so much the Produce must amount to, for the Farmer just to pay his Rent, and get nothing. But 'tis evident, that the Tenth of such a Produce, free from all Labour and Expence, must be equivalent to two annual Rents.

The Profits arising to the spiritual Lords from the Vineyards, was still greater. Vines flourish best on a dry Sand or Gravel, which would not be otherwise fit for Tillage or Pasturage; and as the Labour of Cultivation and

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Manuring is here greater, so the Produce is proportionally richer, and the Profit to the *Lord*, or Priest, in the same Proportion still more. Besides, we may reckon the Revenues arising to these spiritual Lords, or Priests, from the Oil and Fruit of the Olive Groves, from the Balsam Trees, and from the Honey, which fell in vast Quantity upon the Trees and Shrubs in the Woods and Forests, and which the industrious, laborious People collected, and purified, for themselves; the spiritual Profits upon these, I say, must have amounted to an annual Rent upon the Arable Lands, supposing they had taken no Tenths of the Corn and Grain. And now I might stand to the Judgment of any Farmer or Husbandman in this Nation, whether if he was to pay upon every Thing, as the *Israelites* were obliged to do by Law, it must not amount to more than twenty, or even thirty Shillings a Pound on the Rents? What the Author offers farther in Abatement of the Computation I had made of an annual Rent, as that Tithes, and First-born of unclean Beasts, were not paid in Kind, but might be redeemed with a Lamb for an Ass; that the same Sheep and Cattle were not tithed every Year, but only the Increase; and that only the First-born of the Males were offered, and not of the Females: All this is what I had considered before, and made sufficient Allowances for, as he will now see. But *that the same*
Cattle

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Cattle were not tithed every Year, but only the Increase, is a very extraordinary Remark of the Author's; for had this been done, within a certain Number of Years, which might be easily computed, they must have had all the Sheep and Cattle, and there could have been none left, and then their Tithing must have been at an End. But the unclean Beasts, though they could not be offered in Sacrifice, must be redeemed, or otherwise the Neck of the Creature was to be broke; and any Man would rather pay the Value of such a Beast, which was useful to him, and he had brought to his Hand, than have the Creature destroy'd by breaking his Neck. When any Thing belonging to the Lord-Priest was to be redeemed, the general Law of Redemption was to pay the Value of it, as the Priest should set it, and a fifth Part over, if it had been voluntarily offered before. But the Author concludes, that because an Ass might be redeemed with a Lamb of a Year old, therefore a Horse, Camel, or any more noble, useful, and valuable Creature might be redeemed so too. But this is *gratis dictum*, and we have nothing but his own Word for it. But where the Law had not fixed the Price, the Priest was at Liberty to set his own Value, and the Priest was no such Fool to undervalue a Thing that must have been destroyed if this Price had not been given. And as an Ass might be redeemed with a Lamb,
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we must conclude, that *Asses* were very cheap and plenty in that Country. And as to the whole Burnt-Offerings, it can be nothing to his Purpose, since the Tax was the same upon the People, as if the Beast had been eaten; and, therefore, cannot be urged in Abatement of legal Offerings. And it may be presum'd, that such Offerings were but few, and these serv'd to keep up the Awe and Influence of Lord-Priest's Authority, to whom all the Virtue and atoning Power of those Sacrifices must be owing. When a Woman, at her going Abroad, after her Lying-in, was to pay a Lamb for her Churching, though the Lamb was to be burnt, it was the same to the Woman's Pocket, and to the Publick, as if the Priest had eat it. It was all placed to the same Account, and so much sunk to the Publick. But the Author is most egregiously mistaken in imagining, that the Priests got nothing by this: These Sacrifices were reckon'd of the greatest Value with God, and were only ordered on some particular and extraordinary Occasions: And as the whole Virtue of such Offerings depended on the Priest's sprinkling the Blood, by which Action of his the Atonement was made, this serv'd to keep up the Awe and Influence of their Authority and Dominion over Conscience, which was the Foundation of their whole Hierarchy, Theocracy, or sacred Imposture, and of all the vast Revenues which it brought them

them in: For by this Means the Priests came to be considered and regarded as the Saviours of the Nation, their Intercessors with God, and the necessary Dispensers and Conveyancers of all divine Favour. And, I think, 'tis very plain, that this Notion or Pretence of Propitiation and Atonement, by the Action of the Priest, was contrived and introduced by the Politician, as the necessary Foundation and Support of his whole Plan of Government and Power, without which he could never have brought it to bear, or made any Thing at all of it. But I have proved, that this was a gross Imposture, that such Propitiation could be only nominal and imaginary, and that there could be really no such Thing under a Law which admitted of no Pardon, Remission, or any the least Abatement of its full Demands.

But not to follow our Author, through all his little Exceptions to these enormous, theocratic Revenues, as I had set them, I shall here once more state the general Account with him, with some Amendments and Corrections, since he has called on me to do it, so little to his own Advantage.

I shall suppose, therefore, the cultivated Lands of this Country to have been divided into two equal Parts, of which the one Half was Pasturage, and the other Half left for Corn, Vineyards, and Gardens for the choicest and most valuable Fruits and Plants. Now
here

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here the poorest Part of the Country, or the Lands of the lowest Rent, would be set to Corn and Vineyards, and yet these would yield the largest and richest Produce, as they required most Labour; and if they had produced six or eight annual Rents, the Landlord could not be paid the Expence of Tillage, Cultivation, and bringing to the Market for Use, Corn, and the Labourer subsisted. Upon Corn Ground, or Land sown to Wheat and Barley with us, the Tithe, when paid in Kind, amounts, one Time with another, to an annual Rent of the Land thus employed. An Acre of Land sown to Wheat, will produce at least twenty Bushels, if there be a tolerable Crop, and may be much more; of this two Bushels is the Parson's, which at five Shillings a Bushel, is ten Shillings to him; or if it is Barley at three Shillings a Bushel, it will be six Shillings neat to the Priest; which is more than Land thus employ'd can be reckoned at by the Acre on an Average, or taking all such Lands one with the other. But the Crops may, and very often are, much greater, and the Price of the Grain double to what have been here set, while the Rent and Labour are still the same; and then the Value of the Produce, and consequently of the Tenths, must increase in Proportion. Besides, the Proprietor, out of his Rent, pays the Land-Tax, and other necessary Charges and Expences, as well as running the Risque of
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bad Tenants; whereas the Parson has his Share neat and free, without any Trouble or Expence. And let the Charge of Manuring be ever so great, and though it should be ten Times the Rent, as it often is, yet still the Tither, with the Grain, has the Tenth of all that Labour which the Occupier must pay for. With Regard to Vineyards, and Gardens for rich Fruits, the Profit to the Tither is still greater, and may amount to several annual Rents upon the Land thus husbanded, as any Farmer, or Occupier of an Estate, would convince the Author.

But the Profits arising to the Priest or Tither, depend not merely on the first Harvest Crop, or natural Produce of such Arable Land; for between Harvest and Seed-Time, it may bear a second Crop of a different Kind, and which may be sufficient to pay the whole Rent: And where there is no such after Crop, the Land produces Herbage and Feed for Sheep and Cattle, for about three Months: And from all this the Tither reaps his Advantage from those Sheep and Cattle, and their Increase, while fed upon the Arable. From all this, I hope, our Author will allow, that the Profits to the Tither upon Arable, Vineyards, and Gardens, where all is paid in Kind, and rigidly exacted, must amount to considerably more than an annual Rent of the Lands, and if I should set it at a Rent and half, I should be sufficiently within Compass,

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pais, as any Farmer, or Occupier, might satisfy this Gentleman.

I now come to the other Half of the Lands, as I had divided them into Tillage and Pasture. And here from the Pasture, they had a Tenth of all Grass and Herbage, and of all the Fruits, as Olives, Nuts, Figs, &c. of which they had great Plenty growing about their Meadows and Pastures; and, indeed, these Field Fruit-Trees grew all over the Country, as well about their Arable as Pasture Enclosures. This Tenth, free of all Labour and Expence, must have been at least three Tenths of the annual Rent, or worth so much to the Occupier.

After the Tenth of the natural Produce of the Ground in Herbage, and Field-Fruits, had been taken off, the Spirituality had likewise a Tenth of all the Increase of the standing Stock; and this yearly Increase must have been more than the standing Stock, by which the whole Herbage, or natural Produce of the Pastures, was consumed; for their Sheep and Cattle were exceeding fruitful; and as the Gros of the People had been always Shepherds and Herdsmen, from the Beginning of their Nation, they were more skilful in breeding Sheep and Cattle, and making the most of their Flocks and Herds, than any other Nation; and as the Ewes had often two or three Lambs apiece, so a Cow might have two Calves at a Birth.

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It must be here supposed, that the original standing Stock, which consumed the Herbage of the Pastures and Arable Feed too, was always the same; for as some were continually draughted out, others must be added in their Room, to keep up still the same Number, as the common, regular Consumption was the same. And from hence it is evident, that the constant, regular Consumption, and consequently the annual Increase, must have been at least equal to this original standing Stock, for otherwise the standing Stock must have been continually diminishing, and at last quite exhausted. But I have proved the annual Increase and Consumption to have been more than this original standing Stock. From hence this general Principle may be laid down, that in every Landed Estate fed in Whole, or in Part, with Sheep, Cattle, or any live Goods, the annual Increase must be at least equal to the Consumption, or standing Stock, for otherwise the Stock must still diminish, and at last be quite annihilated; but if the Consumption goes beyond this, the annual Increase must be more than the standing Stock in the same Proportion. This, therefore, I shall venture to take as a *Postulat-um*, that where the Quantity of manured Pasture Land is fix'd, the yearly Increase cannot be less than the standing Stock. But if the Number of People increase, or there be any foreign Demand, it may be greater in
any

any Proportion. And then *secondly*, I shall suppose, that any manured, well-cultivated Estate in Pasturage, to be full stock'd, must require two annual Rents. As to the first of these Suppositions, common Sense may decide it, as being in a Manner self-evident; and as to the second, if the *Divines* should dispute it, I must appeal to the *Farmers*, who are the best Judges in this Case. This being premised, a just Computation of the Value of Tithes in Cattle, upon Pasture, and to be strictly and legally exacted in Kind, may be easily computed. The Stock upon the Pasturage is worth two annual Rents of the Land: The Tenth of this is two Tenths of the Rent: These two Tenths of the Rent in Sheep, or Cattle, come as free to the Tither, and as much exempt from all Labour, Expence, and Hazard, as if he had taken it in Grass or Corn, which cost the Occupier, or Manurer, three annual Rents; and, therefore, depriving him of two Tenths of his Rent, is depriving him of six Tenths; because all his Labour, Expence, and Hazard, are now to be added to the original, neat Rent of the Land. Suppose the Farmer, or Occupier, had lost nine Lambs or Calves successively, and saved the Tenth, the Tither would take that Tenth, without any Allowance for his Charge, or Losses. I do not here pretend to make this nine to one a general Rule, for I only charge all Labour, Expences, and Hazard

ward of Losses, as three to one, on the annual, bare, or neat Rent; but had the Tither himself rented the Estate, and been at all the Charge and Hazard of feeding and raising the Sheep and Cattle, which brought his Share to Perfection, and put it into his Hands, it must have cost him infinitely more than it does now, because he has it for nothing. It may be said, perhaps, that this spiritual Donee richly deserved his Reward, had it been ten Times more valuable, because he saved the Soul of the Donor; but I cannot enter into such Computations, and, therefore, must leave every Man, in this Case, to judge for himself. But supposing two Tenths of the whole Produce, after all Labour, Expence, and Hazard are born and discharged, to be equivalent to six Tenths of the bare, neat Rent, these sixth Tenths, with the three as settled before, will make nine Tenths of the original, annual Rent.

The next Account is, that of all the first-born Males, which I shall allow, since the Author will have it so, to be but half the First-born. But then, if a Cow had two Male Calves, or a Ewe two or three Lambs at once, all these were first born, at the first Impregnation of the Creature; they were the first that opened the Womb, which is all that the Law intends, since it would be impossible, in most such Cases, to know which came out first; and the Law did not forbid

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such Creatures to have more than one for the first Time. However, to give the Author all the Allowance possible, or that he can reasonably demand, I shall suppose the Increase from the first-born Males to have been but half a Tenth of the standing, original Stock in Sheep and Cattle, or a Tenth of an annual, prime Rent, as before. And as this Tenth too was charged with all the Labour, Expence, and Hazard of raising, feeding, &c. it must be three Tenths of the prime Rent, which, with the other nine, make twelve Tenths upon the whole Rent. Now 'tis very plain, though this Writer seems unwilling to own it, that all these Tenths were Tenths, not of the annual Rents or Value of the Lands, but of the whole Produce, with all the Labour, Expence, and Hazard annexed to it; and this could not be less than three Tenths of an yearly or prime Rent to every Tenth on the whole Labour and Produce of the Lands, as I have put it at the very lowest Rate that can be supposed or admitted; and very often the Produce from the Labour might be ten or twenty Times the prime Rent, as it is still with us. But all this Labour the spiritual Tither paid nothing for, though it be an hundred Times more than the yearly Rent of the Land. It was not, therefore, the Lands upon the annual Rents, but the Labour and Industry, the Sweat and Toil of the People, that was taxed by the spiritual Law. It was not

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not in the Nature of a Land-Tax, but Excise, in which an Acre, or any Quantity of Ground might pay in one Year the whole Value of the Land in Fee Simple, or Inheritance. I could give Instances of this in a great Part of the Lands now sown to Barley with us, including the Land-Tax, with other Pound-Rates, the Six-pence a Bushel paid upon all the Barley made into Malt, and the Tax upon Liquors afterward made out of that Malt for publick Sale. But if these Things seem new and strange to our Author, I would have him get some of his Country Farmers to tax and abate my Bill of Charges, as above. For none of these were Land-Taxes, or Pound-Rates upon the Value of Lands, but Taxes upon all Labour, and the Fruits and Produce of it; and that too upon all the Necessaries of Life, and Home Produce and Consumption. And this is a Method never taken in the World, and rigorously exacted by Law, but under an absolute, arbitrary Power. Our Laws relating to the Spirituality now come nearest to it, but with such Mitigations and Abatements, that they are no more in Comparison of the other, than a Flea-bite to the Sting of a Scorpion.

I shall now settle the Account with our Author relating to the Property of the *Levites* in Land. They had forty eight of the largest, strongest, and richest Cities in the Kingdom allotted them on the first Division and Settle-

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ment by *Joshua*. We never find above four hundred and fifty Towns and Cities mentioned either in Scripture, by *Josephus*, or in any Map of the Country. In *Joshua's* Time, when the Land was divided, they were not in Possession of much more than one Half of these, but I shall suppose two Thirds; or that they had three hundred Cities and Towns of one Sort or other then in Possession. But one Third of these were not Places of any considerable Largeness, Riches, or Strength. The Community, Bulk, or labouring Part of the People lived in the small, open Towns and Villages; and though these were very populous, and built at small Distances from each other, yet they were not Places of any Strength or Defence. The *Levites*, therefore, had one Half of the principal Towns and Cities then in Possession, and at least an eighth Part of all the Places of every Sort they had conquered, or at any Time after, during the Reigns of the Judges. But a great Part of the Country, divided and given to the other Tribes, was not in Possession; for *Joshua* divided and took in all *Philistia* and *Zidonia*, which were never conquered or possessed at all, from first to last, and not even in *David's* Time. When the *Levites* were numbered, the whole Sum of the Males, from a Month old and upward, came but to twenty two thousand; *Numb. iii. 39*. Whereas the other Tribes, at an Average, or one with another,

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another, amounted to fifty thousand; and the whole Number of the Males to six hundred thousand, reckoning only from twenty Years old and upward. The Number of Souls below twenty must be nearly equal to those above, from twenty to sixty. But I shall suppose, that fifteen thousand of the twenty two thousand Males of *Levi* might be upward of twenty, and only seven thousand below that to a Month, which is certainly a very liberal Allowance; and then the Tribe of *Levi*, in Proportion to any other single Tribe, at an Average, will be as three to ten; and to the whole Number of the other Tribes, but as one to forty. Now when we speak of the Power and Property of any Number or Body of Men, with Regard to any other Community, we must take in Proportion, or Number for Number; and it is upon this Foot that we must compute and judge of the Strength and Wealth of *Levi*. *Hebron*, which was the chief City of the *Levites*, was then the first City of the Kingdom, and so it had always continued, till *David* having conquered *Jerusalem*, and driven out the *Jebusites*, made that his principal, or royal Seat. And whoever will be at the Pains to examine the Matter, may see, that the Places given to *Levi* were the principal Cities and Towns in the whole Country. And then, whoever considers the Smallness of their Number, that they were but three Tenths of any other

U 3 Tribe,

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Tribe, at an Average, and but one fortieth of the whole People, will find, that their Inheritance even in a Landed Interest, was not proportionally much short of any other Tribe, or equal Number : And then as this Tribe had been originally possessed of the chief Cities and Towns for Riches and Strength throughout the Kingdom, and thus disposed of in it, that they might be ready, on all Occasions, as Informers, Surveyers, Appraisers, Assessors, and Collectors of Taxes for the supream, spiritual Lord the High Priest, and were all most firmly united and attached to the *spiritual Interest*; this must have given them vastly more Power and Influence, than it was possible any other Tribe, or even the Princes of the Tribes, could have. We see now the vast Wealth and Power of the Spirituality in most Popish Countries; but never any Thing came up to the Rigour and Tyranny of this Law, nor were ever any People in the World, if we except *Egypt*, so miserably priest-ridden, and conscientiously enslav'd to a *Hierarchy*.

As to the Poll-Tax, which I mentioned, I think the Author has justly excepted against it; and as I am not, upon second Thought, satisfied in it myself, I freely give it up; but for the occasional Fines, Forfeitures, and legal Exactions, payable for legal Uncleanesses, and Purifications, I think I have removed his Objections to what I had offered about it, and proved, that it must have given the Spirituality

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ritualty a most insufferable Power, and kept the whole Nation in continual Awe of them.

Free-will Offerings, or voluntary Gifts, may be as burdensome and oppressive, and as inconsistent with the Happiness and Welfare of Society, as any legal Impositions, where the Conscience itself is blinded and enslaved by a false Religion, and wrong Notions of the Nature, Perfections, and true, acceptable Worship of God. How far a misguided Conscience, and a blind Obedience to a Hierarchy, may enslave and ruin a Nation, we have sufficient Proofs from the History of all Christian Nations since Christianity came to be established, and a Hierarchy supported and assisted by the Civil Power. Our own pious Ancestors before the Reformation, had given, by voluntary Resignations, seven Tenths of all their enclosed, manured Land, to their spiritual Lords and Intercessors with God; and these Lands were all made irredeemable: And while the Spirituality enjoyed so great a Part of the best and richest Lands, the Crown-Lands, and the Estates of the Nobility and Gentry lay mostly in Parks, Woods, Forests, and open Downs, Heaths, and Moors, which they let out at small Rents to their poor Tenants.

The Author of the *Atlas Historique* assures us, that the Spirituality, or Clergy, is now the most considerable Part of the three Orders into which that Kingdom is now divided,

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though they have lately suffered a considerable Diminution. He reckons the Religious of both Sexes, upon their spiritual Foundations, at upward of two hundred thousand, and computes their Revenues at three hundred and twelve Millions of Livers, or about twenty six Millions Sterling, which is more than all the Cash, or circulating Money of *England*, and equal to an annual Rent of the Lands in *France*; for though they are more than three Times our Extent of Ground, yet their Lands are not a third Part so good. They can scarce ever export any Corn; whereas we can answer our own Home Consumption, and occasionally supply their Deficiency too. If we look into other Countries, where the People are blindly enslaved to the Power of a Hierarchy, we shall not find this State of the Case in *France* at all mended; and yet the Power of the Spirituality in these Countries, is not greater, or more enormous, than what *Moses* had established for the *Levitical* Hierarchy. For by this Law, though no Man could sell, or alienate his Inheritance to any common Subject, or Layman, he might part with as much as he pleased, and make it irredeemable, to the *spiritual Lords*. And under such a Constitution of spiritual Blindness and Slavery, where all the Virtue and Acceptableness of their Sacrifices must depend on the Hierarchy, and their Ministrations, and where no Atonement could be made,

made, or Blessing from God expected without it, what would not a Man give which was in his Power beyond what the Law had exacted? And, indeed, the Pope, under the greatest Degeneracy and Corruption of the Christian Church, was but the supream Pontiff, or High Priest of the *Gentiles*. Whoever will consider the Matter impartially, and take Things as they are, must see, that the Papal Hierarchy has been formed upon the same Principles and Plan of spiritual Power and Dominion, with that of *Moses*. And when this Author supposes the one to have been originally a divine Institution, and is not able to prove its having been ever repealed, I know not how he will get rid of the other, which still subsists upon the same Foot of Miracles and divine Authority, and has been held by the *uninterrupted Possession* of so many Ages from *Moses*, and the Prophets, and which had been all along comply'd with by Christ and the Apostles, as the *Jewish Hierarchy* was. Popery is nothing but *Judaism* a little disguised, or mixt in somewhat different Dress; and I might challenge this Writer to urge any Arguments in Favour of the one, which will not hold as good for the other. The Nature and Reason of the Thing is the very same in both, and both are equally repugnant to the Perfections of God, to his true, spiritual, acceptable Worship, and to the natural Rights and Liberties of Mankind.

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kind. And, therefore, his supposing a divine Authority in one Case more than the other, is begging the Question, and asserting what he can never prove. No Book, or Writing, can prove itself, nor is the Authority of *Moses* to be taken in his own Cause, more than of any other. But while an Author will still go upon a Principle which I do not grant, and which he cannot prove, there is but little to be done between him and me.

C H A P. V.

THE Author takes up a great Part of his eighth Chapter in vindicating the Oracle, particularly in the Case of the *Levite* and *Benjamites*, where a whole Tribe had been cut off, Men, Women, and Children, in a War, which the Oracle and Priest had encouraged, and engaged them in. The Author cannot deny, that this enraged Multitude of four hundred thousand Men, whom the revengeful *Levite* had set on Fire, asked Counsel of their Oracle before they would attempt any Thing, or put their vow'd Revenge in Execution, and asked who should go up first, as not doubting of Success. Now here the Oracle might have forbid their going up at all, and told them some milder and more reasonable Method might be found out to
avenge

avenge the Death of one Woman, without destroying the whole City. But the divine Oracle seemed to foresee no more than the People themselves, what would be the Event, and that they should be repulsed two Days successively, with the Loss of forty thousand of their own Men. The second Day after they had gone up, they wept before the Lord until the Evening, and asked Counsel again, whether they should once more go up against their Brethren of *Benjamin*. Here the least Discouragement in the World might have prevented any farther Destruction, and saved the City and Tribe. But they are again set on to the bloody Enterprize, and ordered to go up, and were again beaten and repulsed. The People now seemed quite disheartned, and could not but begin to think, that surely the Lord was not on their Side. They went up again in the utmost Doubt and Perplexity, and wept before the Lord, and offered Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings all that Day unto the Evening. And now they asked, with greater Earnestness and Importunity than ever, whether they should go up, or forbear, push on the War, or drop it? But they were again sent up, and animated to the bloody Slaughter. And now a Stratagem is laid, which could not fail of Success, and evidently shews, that the Oracle, or Priest, was resolved to push his Revenge to the utmost Extremity. Now I asked, whether this Oracle knew, or
forefaw

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foresaw at first, that this vast Army of mad Revengers would be twice repulsed and beaten, with the Loss of forty thousand of their own Men, and that they would succeed in the third Attack, to the utter Destruction of the City, and whole Tribe? If he did not know, or foresee this, he must have been as ignorant as the People themselves, who had asked Advice of him; but if he did know and foresee it, yet would not prevent it, and give Orders against it, he could have no common human Justice or Mercy; and in both Cases, he could not be God, and could have been no other but the Priest himself. To this the Author's Reply is very remarkable, and I shall quote him in his own Words, *p.* 247. "How
 " does this follow? Will he pretend there
 " could be no just Reasons, why God should
 " see fit to *permit* that Slaughter of the *Isra-*
 " *elites*, supposing their Cause to be never
 " so just, except he knows, and is able to
 " judge those Reasons? It is very evident,
 " that in the Course of divine Providence, a
 " just Cause is often suffered to be oppressed
 " for a Time; and that wicked Men are
 " often suffered to vanquish those who are
 " much better than themselves." All this is
 very true, but then there is a vast Difference
 between what God may permit, or suffer,
 and what he may command, order, and di-
 rect. It is one Thing to ask, what God
 may permit in a common Course of Provi-
 dence,

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dence, and a quite different Question to ask, what God may expressly command. If Men will undertake any Thing upon their own Judgment, or Opinion, they must take the Consequences of it, and cannot blame God, or Providence, for it. Supposing the Cause of the *Israelites* against the *Benjamites* to have been, at first, just and righteous, and that God had ordered and commanded them to go up, and revenge themselves to their own Destruction, and to the Loss of more Lives of their own, than the *Benjamites* had in all, which is here supposed to have been done twice; this must plainly argue Ignorance or Injustice in God, and that instead of punishing the *Benjamites*, he intended, without giving any Intimation of it, to plague the *Israelites*. Again, supposing God had sent them up the third Time against the City, when they seemed to repent of what they had done so much to their own Loss, and God should then assure them, that they should prevail the next Day, and take the City certainly, knowing, at the same Time, that the Consequence of this would be the utter Destruction of the whole Tribe, by the most unparallel'd Violence and Wickedness, without giving them any Warning or Caution to the contrary, or letting them know how far they might carry their Revenge; supposing this, I say, which is here the plain Matter of Fact, I think it is very evident, that God himself must be chargeable with

with all the Consequences of it, as the Author, Contriver, and Encourager of the whole Scene. But this Writer seems resolved to lay any Blame upon *God* himself, rather than the *Priest*. He cannot distinguish between the permissive and effective, ordering and directing Will of God; and 'tis impossible he should make any such Distinction with the least Sense or Consistency, while he is under the hard Necessity of defending these *Hebrew* Writers, who never themselves made any such Distinction, and who continually represent God as commanding, ordering, and effecting whatever he thought fit to permit or suffer in the Course of Providence. Thus God hardened *Pharaoh's* Heart against all the Power and Conviction of his own Miracles; and God raised up and commissioned every Enemy and Destroyer this Nation ever had; and in the same Way God suffers, *i. e.* commissions this Writer to talk in the same Strain. Here lies the Stress of the Cause, if the Author will take Notice of it; or whether he will or no, I shall here rest this Part of the Argument, till I hear farther from him; and, perhaps, this farther Hearing may be expected both by his Friends and Enemies.

He next comes, *p.* 249. to the Argument of Prophecy, as a Proof of immediate Inspiration, with Regard to the Knowledge of future Events; but he can make no Use of it against me, as he could not at first. I had

not

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not denied, but some of those antient Sages might be inspired, or extraordinarily assisted in the Foresight of Things to come. But then I observed, that this might be the Case of bad Men as well as good, as it was of *Balaam*, who notwithstanding his Foresight, is represented as a very wicked Man, and an Enemy in his Heart to God, and his chosen People. But I observed farther, that it must be very difficult, if not impossible, for us now to distinguish with any Certainty between History and Prophecy, considering the many Additions and Supplements to those original Books by after Editors, at great Distances of Time. Upon this he harangues, for ten Pages together, *p.* 249—259. in which he would persuade us, that the Matter, perhaps, may not be as I say. All which being nothing to my Purpose, I must refer the more curious Reader to the Book itself, as above quoted. But the Author cannot admit, that there were any Prophets of the Lord, but such as were true Prophets, or whose Predictions came to pass. And thus among four hundred *Prophets* of the Lord in *Abab's* Time, there was but one *true Prophet* of the Lord. *Abab's* four hundred Prophets were such as had been received and recognized as true Prophets, or Prophets of the Lord, both by the King and People, according to the known Settlements and Institutions for Prophets at that Time, and they were those who had

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escaped,

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escaped, and been saved from the common Slaughter which had been made among them. But in the same Way, among four hundred Priests of the Lord, there might not be one righteous Person, or *true Priest*. But in the Case before us, the Lord himself is represented as having deceived his own Prophets, by sending out a lying Spirit among them, for the Destruction of *Abab* and his House. And 'tis very probable, that this Concurrence of the Prophets might have been a Snare laid by them for the King, to revenge the Death of their Brethren, who had been cut off under this Reign.

But if nothing but the Event or Accomplishment, which might not be till a long Time to come; if nothing but this could determine the Character of the Prophet, what possible Rule of Judgment could the People have in most Cases, to know a true Prophet from a false? The same Prophet might be sometimes right, and at other Times wrong in his Predictions, when the Event came to discover it. The prophetic Order, as originally instituted and established by *Samuel*, and as publickly owned and recognized all down, were as well known as the Priests, Judges, or Men of any other Order. And yet Men of this holy Order, and equally owned as Prophets of the Lord, both by King and People, might deliver quite contrary Messages, and make repugnant publick Declarations,

as by a Commission from God, and with a *Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel*, as in the Case of *Jeremiah* and *Hananiah*, Jer. xxviii. Now what could the King and People think in this Case? They were both of the same prophetic Order, and both owned as such. The Event, indeed, in this Case, must soon decide the Question; but even then, when the Thing foretold came to pass, as in this Case, the contrary was scarce possible, in human Appearance; yet nothing at last could be concluded from it, but that it had been foreknown, and some Way or other notify'd to that Prophet.

According to our Author, this holy Order instituted by *Samuel*, and publicly owned, known, and recognized all down, as Prophets of the Lord; this Order, I say, must have been nothing but a Cheat and Imposture at first, and a mere political Contrivance to curb and restrain the regal Power, when *Samuel* could no longer prevent its taking Place. For of what Use or Benefit could such an Order be to the Nation, when, perhaps, not one in a hundred, or in many hundreds of them, were true Prophets, or knew more of Futurity, than other People? And was not *Nathan* himself, *Samuel's* immediate Successor, a false Prophet, in declaring, as from God, the Perpetuity of *David's* Kingdom, or Government over *Israel*? This everlasting, or for ever, lasted but one Generation after him; for

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at the Death of *Solomon*, the ten Tribes, or Kingdom of *Israel*, revolted from the House of *David*, and never returned to their Obedience more. But all the Prophets, after that Revolt, took up with that first Prophecy or Declaration from God by *Nathan*, concerning the Perpetuity of *David's* Kingdom; and from hence they concluded, that the whole Kingdom must, one Day or other, be restored to the House of *David*, for a Perpetuity; and this gave Rise to the *Jewish* Notion of *Messiahship*. But before *David* could regain *Israel*, he lost *Judah* too, and has had no Kingdom ever since, tho' it is now above two thousand three hundred Years ago. And, therefore, certainly, let our Christian Divines say what they will, the *Jewish* Messiah is not yet come, nor are any of those Prophecies concerning him yet accomplished. Our Author, perhaps, may prove the contrary in his systematical Way, but it can never be proved in any Way of Truth, or common Sense. But all that he has offered upon this Head is so very trifling and insignificant, that unless he could have made more of his Argument from Prophecy, he had much better have let it alone.

I had made it plainly appear from the History, that *Samuel* had acted as High Priest, from the Death of *Eli*, till *Saul* had been confirmed in the Kingdom: I had proved, that this could not be less than forty Years; that during this Period, he had had the whole Admi-

Administration or supreme Power, civil, ecclesiastical, and military; that he presided in all the Sacrifices, on the greatest Occasions, as at the Coronation of the King, and other great, publick Solemnities, where none but the High Priest himself could preside: I had shewn from the History, that during this Period, there could be no other High Priest, and that after the Death of *Eli* there had been no other High Priest of that Family, till *Abia*, the Great Grandson of *Eli*, was put in by *Saul*, after *Samuel*, solely against his Will, had been forced to resign his whole Government in every Capacity; and the Texts I quoted for this, are the same which Sir *John Marsham*, and other learned Men had produced, to prove, that *Samuel* had acted as High Priest during this Interval and Interruption of the legal Succession of the Priesthood. But after all this, the Author has the Assurance to say, p. 268, *That it cannot be proved, or that it does not appear.* But if it does not appear to him, I presume, it must to every one else, who has no Interest or Bias to the contrary. But for my own Part, I despair of ever making any Thing appear to such a Writer, that he has not a Mind to see. But though *Samuel* was not the right Heir, yet he might be nearer ally'd to the *High Priesthood* than this Writer imagines. The Historian lets us know, that *Samuel's* Mother could never have a Child by her Husband,

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nor breed at all, till she went up and made her Case known, and told her Distress for a Child to the Priests, who then stood before the Lord. We are also assured, that *Eli's* Sons lay with the Women who came up with their Gifts and Offerings to the Sanctuary. We know too, that this Woman devoted, or gave the Child *Samuel* to the Lord; and that the Lord took him, and bred him up as his own Son, clothed him while a Child, as a Priest in a *linen Ephod*. All this the Historian has plainly and frankly told us; but I know not how far it may help out our Author, as to *Samuel's* Right to the High Priesthood; but if he could make out any Thing of a Right, it would be much better than denying or shifting off so plain a Fact. In the remaining Part of this eighth Chapter, *p.* 271—281. he makes a feeble Attempt in Defence of *David*, but how far he has cleared up his Character against my Account of him, I must leave the Reader to judge. But he represents me, all along, as a most false, impudent, shameless Accuser. I can forgive him all his Ribaldry, and personal Abuse, since I know he must be very angry, as he is driven to very hard Shifts. The Sufferer must complain.

The Author goes on, in his ninth Chapter, to vindicate the Prophets, against what I had said of their Male Practices, Misbehaviour, and Prostitution of their Holy Order; and he

he undertakes to prove, that the antient *Persians* were Heathen Idolaters, and Worshipers of the Sun and Fire. Now though all this is purely incidental, and not at all affecting the main Points in Debate, yet I shall take some Notice of what he has offered. But when he undertakes to vindicate the Prophets, I suppose he means the *true Prophets*, or *Prophets of the Lord*, as he calls them; for as to the Order in general, as they had been instituted by *Samuel* under the Sanction of divine Authority, they are represented as a grossly corrupt, and degenerate Order or Body, by the few honest Men they had among themselves, and of their own Order; and these few, perhaps, from first to last, might have been, at an Average, not above one at most in four hundred. But such of them as have been recommended to us by the *Jewish* Historians, must, doubtless, have been true Prophets of the Lord, and, therefore, under an infallible Guidance and Direction: But this *Infallibility*, or *unerring Guidance*, hangs like a Mill-stone about the Author's Neck, and he is so sensible of his own Inability, that he dares not professedly attempt it, or enter upon the Proof; and yet he supposes, and begs it all along; and if you will not give it, he is quite undone as to the *Argument*!

I had urged the Hand the Prophets had in the Destruction of *Abab* and his House, and anointing *Jehu*, who proved as great an Idolater

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later and Tyrant as the other; and I had said, that no Miracles that might be supposed to have been wrought by those Prophets, could prove any divine Authority, or Commission, for such a general Slaughter and Destruction in a Country. Our Author, p. 284. tells us, *That we have the same Proof the Prophets Elijah and Elisha wrought those Miracles, that we have, that they had any Hand in anointing Jehu.* But I have proved, that we cannot have the same Evidence, or Proof, from Testimony, for Miracles, as for natural Facts, because the natural Improbability, or Incredibility of the Thing, in this Case of supernatural Facts, will generally, if not always, outweigh the Credit of the Testimony. Besides, the Miracles said to have been wrought by those Prophets, were private Facts, done in a Corner, and before none but Friends, and stanch Believers, who would be sure not to lessen the Miracle, if they did not invent the Story; and then the most amazing of these Miracles mentioned of *Elisha*, carry with them all the Air and Appearance of Romance and Fiction, as the Prophet's stretching himself Part to Part, and Limb to Limb, upon the correspondent Parts and Limbs of the Child whom he raised from the Dead, *2 Kings* iv. 34. And the Bones of this Prophet, after he was dead, raised a dead Man out of his Grave, by being thrown into it, *2 Kings* xiii. 21. But these were private Stories which

which the Prophets themselves spread about and recorded, to aggrandize their own Order. But the Anointing of *Jehu* was a publick, notorious Fact, which the whole Nation were Witnesses of, as they were of the fatal Consequences of it in *Jehu's* Reign. And then this Writer goes on eternally upon a false Supposition, which though it has been abundantly refuted over and over, yet he will still retain. Had God intended this Power of working Miracles, as a Proof of any special Authority, or Commission from him, he would never have given it, as he often did, to the false Prophets, Impostors, and unrighteous, wicked Men. And yet setting aside this false, unprov'd Supposition, the Author's whole Argument, in his two Books, must be reduced to nothing. An Instance how easy it is, in the Way of School Divinity, to spin a whole System out of the Air!

What the Author offers farther in Vindication of the Prophets, against the Account I had given of them, as it appears to me purely evasive and insignificant, and the Matter itself is of no great Consequence, and does not affect the main Points in Debate, I am willing to let rest where it is, after what has been said on both Sides, and leave the Reader to take which he thinks most probable. But what he offers, *p.* 287—294. relating to the tutelar Gods, and mediatorial Worship of the Heathen Nations, may deserve parti-

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cular Notice. Our Author very seldom starts any Thing of Consequence, but this is really so. He will have it, that the Idolatry of *Jeroboam* first, and of *Jehu* afterward, were of a perfectly different Nature and Kind from that of *Abab*, who had intervened. *Jeroboam* had set up the local, tutelar Gods of *Egypt*, as the *Egyptians* had placed him upon the Throne; and this local, tutelar Worship *Jehu* restored, after he had cut off all *Abab's* House, Friends, and Family. But *Abab*, in the Interval, had set up *Baal*, as the God of *Phœnicia* or *Zidonia*, under a Notion that this *Zidonian Baal*, the God of his Queen *Jezebel*, was the supream God, and Fountain of all Power, both in Heaven and in Earth; whereas the plain Truth of the Matter is, that *Abab*, having broken his Alliance with *Egypt*, who had set up the *Jeroboam* Family, now took to the tutelar Gods of another Country, the *Phœnicians* or *Zidonians*, from whence he had taken his Queen, and who had now also broke with *Egypt*. As they had had the *Egyptian* Guardians before, they had now the *Phœnician* or *Zidonian* Guardian Gods. And now the *Egyptian* Priests and Gods went to Pot, and the *Zidonian* were set up. But when *Jehu* had gained his Point, and renewed the old Alliance with *Egypt*, after the Destruction of *Abab* and his House, he cast off the Gods of *Zidon*, and took to those of *Egypt* again. But this was done

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under a Pretence of a Zeal for the Lord God of *Israel*, which was the only Pretence that could have taken Effect. This is the plain Truth of the Case, that *Ahab* being in another Interest, had thrown off the tutelar Gods of *Egypt*, and taken to those of *Zidon*. But *Jehu* having gained his Point, by the Interest and Influence of the Prophets, renewed his Alliance with *Egypt*, and took to their Gods again. But our Author's Conceit, that these two Schemes of Idolatry were of a different Kind, and that the one consisted only in worshiping the true God in a wrong Way, and the other in worshiping a local, tutelar God ultimately, as the one supream Being, and Fountain of all Power, without any Notion of the one true God, or terminating Object of Worship, and Fountain of Power; I say, this Notion, or Fetch of his, is absolutely unsupported by any History, sacred or profane. Nor is he able to prove, that any Heathen Nation in the World, *Egyptians*, *Greeks*, *Affyrians*, *Babylonians*, or *Romans*, ever imagined their local, tutelar Gods to be the one supream Being, or Fountain of all Power. Indeed, when one Nation was to conquer another, they would implore the Assistance, or court the Interest of the Gods of that Country; and they had Methods of Evocation, by which they thought they could call the Gods of one Country into another, and prevail with them to be propitious to the
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Conquerors; of which we have many Instances in the *Greek* and *Roman* Story. But still they had all a Notion of one supream Deity, or Fountain of Power, and they only regarded their national, tutelar Gods, as Ministers of Providence, and Sub-Governors of the World, by Commission from the supream Deity. And this was the Case, with Respect to the *Hebrew* or *Abramic* Family, as well as other Nations. They always distinguished between the *Jehovah* God, and the Angel of the Lord, or the Angel *Jehovah*; and they never thought these two to be the same Person, or the same Being. The Angel *Jehovah* had never been known under that Name, till the Time of *Moses*; for though the same Angel had often appeared, walked up and down, and conversed with Men before, yet he had never, till now, taken the Name of *Jehovah*, which was peculiar to the supream Being. But *Moses* now first deify'd this Angel, because he must have a local, tutelar, oracular God, and could not have governed the World without it.

The Reverend and Learned *Mr. Shuckford*, in the second Volume of his *Sacred and profane History of the World connected*, has set this Matter in a very clear Light, tho' he may, perhaps, have carried the Argument farther than he intended, as he professes to have undertaken the Work in *Defence of Revelation*. He has clearly proved, that tho' the same

same Angel had appeared and conversed with *Abraham*, and the great Men of the *Hebrew* Nation before; yet he had never, till now, taken the Name *Jehovah*, which had always before, and by all Nations afterwards, been taken as the *Hebrew* peculiar Name of the supream Being, or Fountain of all Power.

Whether this Community of Names, now introduced, will prove a Community of Attributes and Properties, I must leave to the Judgment of the learned Author, and others; but that all the Heathen Nations round about had a clear Notion of one supream Being, or Fountain of Power, and that they never looked upon the tutelar God of *Israel* to be this supream Being, or Fountain of Power, any more than their own national, tutelar Gods, I have this learned Man's Authority for, and clear Proof of. The *Israelites*, from the Days of *Moses*, believed their national, tutelar God to be *Jehovah*, or the *supream* God; but no other Nation upon Earth ever believed it.

The King of Sodom knew the most high God by the Name of Jehovah.——Abimelech, King of the Philistines, knew Jehovah, and was his Servant in Abraham's Time.——God was known by this Name in the Family of Bethuel in Mesopotamia, when Abraham sent thither; and afterwards in Jacob's Days, Laban knew God by this Name. Though it is remarkable, that he did not use the
Word

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Word entirely in the same Sense that Jacob did; for Laban meant by it the God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their Fathers; but Jacob swore by the Fear of his Father Isaac, i. e. Laban meant by Jehovah, the supream, true, and living God, which the Fathers of Abraham, and Abraham had worshiped, before he received farther Revelations than were imparted to the rest of Mankind, and before he built an Altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. After this Abraham and his Posterity determined, that this Lord also should be their GOD, and they invoked God in the Name of this LORD. God was known by the Name of Jehovah to Job the Arabian; but it was not the Lord who appeared to Abraham, whom he knew by this Name; but rather God whom no Man hath seen at any Time.—God's Judgments were executed upon Egypt, not to convince Pharaoh, and his People, that JEHOVAH was the SUPREAM GOD, but to make them know, that the God of the Hebrews, their national, tutelar God, was Jehovah.—The Moabites knew the supream God by this Name.—But we have a very remarkable Instance of the Word Jehovah used by a Heathen, for the Name of the supream Deity, in Contradiction to the God of the Hebrews, in Times very late, even in the Days of Hezekiah. Rabshakah, who well understood the Hebrew Language, in delivering his Master the King of Assyria's Message, which he expressed in the Hebrew

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Hebrew Tongue, professed, that he was not come up against Jerusalem without the LORD, i. e. JEHOVAH, to destroy it; for that the Lord said unto him, Go up against this Land and destroy it. That Rabshekah, by the Lord, or Jehovah here, did not mean the God of the Jews, though at the same Time he knew, that they called their God [national God] by this Name, is evident, from his very plainly distinguishing them one from the other. From all this, and what the learned Author offers farther upon it, it is plain, that Rabshekah, the King of Assyria's General, knew and owned Jehovah as the supream Being, and Fountain of all Power, though he knew nothing of the tutelar, national God of Israel, whom they called Jehovah, and pretended to be the supream Being himself. The Assyrians knew and owned the supream God, Jehovah Eloim, or El Shaddai; but they knew nothing of the Angel Jehovah, or tutelar God of Israel. From this learned Author's whole Discourse upon this Subject, in which he has supported his Opinion with the best Authorities, it is evident, that the Heathen Nations, from first to last, knew and owned Jehovah as the one supream God, or Fountain of all Power; but they knew nothing of the Hebrew, national, subordinate God, or Angel Lord, as the same with Jehovah God, or the supream Being. And, therefore, the Idolatry of the Heathens, according to this learned Writer,

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Writer, and celebrated Chronologer, did not consist in not knowing, or not owning and worshiping the one true, supream God; but in worshiping him in a wrong Way, and by false Mediators. I must refer the Reader for all this to Mr. *Shuckford's* Chronology, Vol. II. p. 134——146. I have made Breaks where I have not quoted him throughout, and hope I have not mistaken, or misrepresented him, as I would not willingly do so learned, laborious, and candid an Author, to whom I own myself so much indebted. But the learned Author thus concludes his Discourse on this Head. *They did, indeed, worship a Multitude of Deities, but they supposed all but one to be subordinate Divinities. They had always a Notion of one Deity superior to all the Powers of Heaven, and all the other Deities were conceived to have different Offices and Ministrations under him, being appointed to preside over Elements, over Cities, over Countries, and to dispense Victory to Armies, Health, Life, and other Blessings to their Favourites, if permitted by the supream Power. Hesiod supposes one God to be the Father of all the other Deities; and Homer, in many Passages in the Iliad, represents one supream Deity presiding over all the rest; and the most celebrated of their Philosophers alway endeavoured to assert this Theology.* By all this the learned Reader will see, that Dr. *Leland* has quite mistaken the Heathen Divinity and Manner of Worship, and

and knows not the Difference between that and the *Mosaic* Scheme. The *Sabeans* worshiped God by a great Number of subordinate Deities, Angels, or celestial Gods, whom they supposed to inhabit in, and preside over the Sun, Moon, Planets, and Constellations, and from thence to dispense either Good or Evil to the several Nations of the Earth, by Commission from the supream Deity, or Lord of Heaven and Earth. All this Sort of Worship came originally from the Notion of governing, guardian Angels, as residing in the Sun and Hosts of Heaven. But the *Sabeans* Idolaters, at last, came to imagine, that their Heroes and great Men, the Founders of Empires, and Inventors of useful Arts and Sciences, had been begotten by these celestial Gods, and then they gave them the same Names, and sent them after Death to the same Mansions, where they worshiped them under the same Notion, and in the same Capacity as they had done the Angels, or celestial, immortal Gods before.

This was the *Sabeans* Religion and Worship. But the *Hebrews* owned but one subordinate, ministerial God, the *Angel Jehovah*, who might appear visibly, and converse with Men, and in and by whom they worshiped *Jehovah* God, or *El Shaddai*, the supream Deity, who could not be seen, nor represented under any sensible Images. This *Angel Jehovah*, or *Jehovah the Angel*, was the national, residential
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God of *Israel* only, and besides whom they admitted of no other national God, or supreme Minister and Representative, by whom Jehovah God, or *El Shaddai*, could be worshiped. I have been the larger upon this, that the Reader may excuse me from taking any farther Notice of what Dr. *Leland* has offered about Idolatry and false Worship, since he has evidently mistaken the whole Matter, and fallen upon a Subject which he had very little considered, or thought of.

This Writer has a long Discourse of ten or twelve Pages, to prove against Dr. *Hyde*, that the antient *Persians* were gross Idolaters, and that they worshiped the Sun; but the Doctor had fully vindicated them from this Calumny, and shewn how *Herodotus*, and other *Greeks*, came to mistake and misrepresent them in this Matter. But I should rather take the express Declaration of the *Persians* themselves, even of the Remains of the *Magians* to this Day, and the Authority of all the antient eastern Writers, as quoted by that learned Man, than the Testimony of *Herodotus*, and other *Greeks*, who were Strangers and Enemies to the *Persians*, and knew nothing at all of their Religion. The *Persians* had many external Rites and Ceremonies in their Worship, which the *Greeks*, and other Strangers misunderstood, and thought to have been the same Sort of *Sabeian* Idolatry, which they had in their own Country.

C H A P.

CHAP. VI.

THE Author, in his tenth Chapter, comes to the Argument relating to the prophetic Messiahship, the spiritual Gift of Tongues, and the Infallibility or unerring Guidance of the Apostles. This is the very Heart of the Controversy, and yet he has said least to it, and scarce any Thing that can deserve Notice. He here affects to be very sanguine, and sometimes would seem to laugh; but the Reader will soon see, that this *Laughter* is but *Grinning*, and that his Mirth is only from the Teeth outward.

I had asserted, that Jesus of *Nazareth* never owned or declared himself as the *Jewish*, prophetic Messiah, or as that Prince of the House of *David*, who was to gather the Tribes, and restore the Kingdom. But saith he, p. 213, "I shewed on the contrary, that
 " Jesus did all along, during the whole
 " Course of his personal Ministry, on all
 " proper Occasions, declare himself to be the
 " Christ or Messiah," *i. e.* he declared himself openly and publickly, upon all proper Occasions, to be that Prince of the House of *David*, who was to restore the Kingdom. This I had denied, and proved the contrary, by his Renunciation of all temporal Power before *Pilate* on his Trial, and by his sharply rebuking the Devils, whom he cast out, and

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the Sick and Diseased, whom he cured, from ever mentioning or publishing him under this Character. But what shall we do here? Christ expressly declared, that he was, and was not the *Jewish*, prophetic Messiah. He declared, that he was that Prince of the House of *David*, who was to gather the Tribes, and restore the Kingdom to *Israel*; and yet he would be never mentioned or spoken of under this Character, and renounced it at his Trial. I had proved the latter, which the Author cannot deny; and yet he asserts the former. How our Author will reconcile this, I know not; but I had accounted for it very well, by supposing and proving, that Christ's Disciples all along misunderstood and misrepresented him. This, I think, is as clear as Day-Light, and, if the Author will not admit it, he may make as great a Contradiction of the Gospel, as he pleases. I had proved, that the Restoration of the Kingdom by a Prince of the House of *David*, was an essential Character of the *Jewish* prophetic Messiah, and that no Prophet had ever spoken of him, without including this Characteristic of him. But there never was a shrewder Adversary than this Writer, for he can grant all that I contend for, and yet prove me to be grossly mistaken. I had incontestably proved, by the most express Authorities and Quotations from the Prophets, that their Messiah was to be a
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mighty conquering Prince of the House and royal Line of *David*; that he was to set up an extensive Empire and Dominion over all Nations, and the Nation who would not submit to him were to be utterly destroyed; the Metropolis of this vast Empire was to be *Jerusalem*, which was to be rebuilt and enlarged in a vastly more splendid and magnificent Manner than ever, where their Law and Religion, their Priesthood and Sacrifices, were to be restored in the greatest Purity and Perfection. I have proved, that the Disciples themselves continued in this Notion of a temporal Kingdom, and after Christ's Resurrection from the Dead, they expected his second Coming, to set up his Kingdom, and to save or deliver *Israel* in that very Generation. It was in this Sense that they preached Jesus as Christ, and they who had not this Faith in him, as their national Saviour and Deliverer, could receive no Benefit from their miraculous Cures, and were to expect no Salvation. The Ministry of these *Galileans* was confin'd intirely to the *Jewish* Nation, as I have proved. Now what does our Author say to all this? Why, he is not able to disprove, or set it aside, and yet cries out, and exclaims at it, as if it was the most monstrous, absurd, and unreasonable Supposition in the World. Let it be so then, and I know it must be so in his System; but I dare abide by it as Scripture, and the Sense of the Prophets, if they had

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any literal, intelligible Sense at all. But this renown'd Champion will have it, that the Prophets spoke of the Messiah in a mystical, unintelligible Way, and could never be understood by their own Nation from first to last. He complains and insults upon it, that I did not consider the Arguments by which he had cleared the Prophets from the *narrow, mistaken Sense of the Jews*, p. 317. I must profess I could never see any such Arguments in his Book. If the Reader can find any such, he may; but I believe he must look for them through the Author's own Spectacles. Sure I am, that Christ's own Disciples, I mean the *Galileans*, understood the Prophets in the same Sense of a temporal Kingdom, which they could never get rid of. And this, I think, certainly proves, that however they might be *inspired*, yet they were not *infallible*, or under any unerring Guidance. He pretends, that the temporal Kingdom was not essential to the Character of the Messiah, because it was not the Whole of that Character. The Messiah was not only to be a mighty Conqueror and temporal Prince, but a spiritual Saviour too, and to spread Truth, Peace, and Righteousness through the Earth. But why might not these two be very consistent? I am sure the Disciples themselves thought so. He might as well have argued, that because the Body is not the Whole of the Man, therefore it is not necessary or essential to a Man;

Man; and that there may be a *Man* without a *Body*, as well as a *Body* without a Soul; but these, and such like, are the Arguments which I had overlooked, because they are unanswerable.

I had urged, that the Apostles and others, who in that Age had the Spirit, or Holy Ghost, were not infallible, or under any unerring Guidance; and that they never pretended to any such Spirit of Infallibility: And I had proved, that if they had made any such Claim, their Differences and Divisions amongst themselves, both in Doctrine and Practice, must have confuted and convicted them. *Peter* and *Paul*, with Respect to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, preached two different Gospels, and separated at *Antioch*, because they could not agree about the Authority and Extent of the *Jerusalem* Council; and, therefore, they could not continue together, or minister in the same Churches. The Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision all along thought themselves to be still under the Obligation of the whole Law, even as a Matter of Religion, and good Conscience towards God, which *St. Paul* vehemently declared against. And those Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision still preached Jesus as the Christ in a national Sense, and expected his coming again to restore the Kingdom, during that very Generation. They were never convinced, that the Law had been repealed by the

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Death and Resurrection of Christ, either in Whole, or in Part; or that it ever was to be repealed. And if they who had the Spirit, or Holy Ghost, in those Days, had been under any infallible or unerring Guidance, what Need could there be of a superior Rule, whereby to try and judge of those extraordinary Gifts and Powers, whether they were of God, or not. But our Author has fully and clearly answered, or obviated all this, and proved his Point against all Fact, if the Reader will but borrow his Spectacles to find out his Arguments, and see the Force of them. I had proved his Supposition of Infallibility to be evidently false in Fact, from many clear, undeniable Instances, and even from their great Heats and Contentions in the Council itself, before they could come to any Resolution, and from St. *Paul's* rejecting the Authority of this Council afterward, so far as it related to the *Gentiles*. But the Author has considered or cleared up none of these contrary Facts, which stand against his Supposition of Infallibility, or unerring Guidance, so far as I can see; and, I believe, I shall never be able to see it, or be so far illuminated, unless I could use his Glasses.

I had observed, that the Gift of Tongues, as mentioned in the *New Testament*, seems to have been only a preternatural Impetus, or Efflatus, which many of the first Disciples were subject to at certain Times, and that they had

no natural, common Use of Reason, or Understanding, while they were under this Power of the Spirit, or in these *talking Fits*. This has given our Author very great and grievous Offence. "Here he puts off all Disguise, and does all that is in his Power to expose Christianity, and the Proofs of it, to the Scorn and Derision of Mankind," p. 321. But I think it is such Defenders of the Faith as this, who betray and expose Christianity by putting it on a wrong Footing, and false Proof. If I should expose and set aside some false Suppositions and Whims of *School Divinity*, by *Scripture Authority*, I hope Christianity could lose nothing by this; but Truth must always suffer by such Advocates. 'Tis very remarkable, that this Writer cannot contradict me, without arguing directly against Facts, rejecting the plain Scripture Account of Matters, and thereby throwing off that very Authority, which he would make infallible. I had supposed, that there were one hundred and twenty, or thereabout, who were present at this *Pentecost*, or Descent of the Holy Ghost. *But there is no Proof*, saith he, *that there were one hundred and twenty, upon whom the Holy Ghost fell on the Day of Pentecost; or, if there were, that all the hundred and twenty spoke at once*, p. 323. There were about one hundred and twenty, when they all came from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, and went up into an upper Chamber; and all these con-

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tinued in Prayer and Supplication, &c. Acts i. 12, 13, 14. And when the Day of *Pentecost* was come, *all these* were together in one and the same Place, Acts ii. 1. But whether they now all spoke together, or divided themselves into distinct Companies, while they were thus impressed and actuated, is not very material; but 'tis plain, that the Company about them knew nothing of what they would be at, what they were talking off, or what the Meaning should be. And, therefore, some wondered, and thought it a very extraordinary Thing, *the wonderful Works of God*, while others laughed, and thought them all drunk and intoxicated with *new Wine*, till Peter, when the rest were out of the Fit, stood up, and in an intelligible, consistent Discourse, told them the Meaning and Occasion of all this. And if these hundred and twenty had been now for ten Days and Nights under the deepest Secrecy for their Lives, fasting and praying in ~~one~~ Place, or for as much of the Time as they could keep awake, 'tis no Wonder, that something extraordinary should happen to them at last. I think I had prov'd from St. Paul's Account of this Gift of Tongues at *Corinth*, that they who were under this Power of the Spirit, were not *compos mentis*, or in the right Use of their Senses, at that Time; that this was a Gift not tending to Instruction or Edification, but of very ill Consequence; and, therefore, the Apostle exhorts

exhorts them not to covet or seek it, but rather to study and cultivate the *best Gifts*, and such as might tend to *Edification*. And here, instead of minutely following this Writer through his little Shifts and Evasions, I shall refer the Reader to St. Paul's own Account of the Matter, in the fourteenth Chapter of his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, which I had considered and represented before. And when this Writer can make any Thing more of it than I have, I shall talk with him again, if he calls me to it. It is very plain, that they spoke what they could not interpret; and if they spoke what they understood, might they not have interpreted it, or spoken it in the common Language? And how was it possible, that they who knew not what was spoken, should know whether it was Sense, or Nonsense? *If I pray in a strange Tongue*, saith the Apostle, *my Spirit prayeth, but my Understanding is not profited or informed*, Verse 14. *What is it then, I will pray with the SPIRIT, but I will pray with the UNDERSTANDING also; I will sing with the SPIRIT, but I will sing with UNDERSTANDING also*, Verse 15. This was a very severe Rebuke, and a very plain Proof, that the *Spirit* and *Understanding* with them did not go together, and had no Connexion. St. Paul, indeed, thanks God, that he could speak with Tongues more than all of them; and he might very well thank God for it, because
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he could speak different Languages with Understanding, and they could not. He could speak intelligibly, to Men of different Nations and Languages, without Muttering, Grumbling, Trumpeting, Piping, &c. as they did with strange Voices, instead of intelligible Speech.

As to the Differences between St. *Peter* and *Paul*, or between the Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision and Uncircumcision, and St. *Paul's* declaring, that he had received his *own Gentile Gospel* from God by Revelation, without concerting, or advising with *Peter*, or any of the Circumcision; that he alone had been appointed the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, and that they of the Circumcision had no Right or Authority to intermeddle, or disturb his Ministry in those Churches; I have said so much to all this already, that I shall take no Notice of this Writer's little Cavils, or peremptory Assertions to the contrary, in his eleventh Chapter. He very confidently avers, that there was a perfect Harmony between *Peter* and *Paul*, and no Difference between the Circumcision and Uncircumcision in these Matters; and that what I have offered to the contrary, is *mere Fiction and Forgery*. I must leave this to the Judgment of the Reader, after what has been said on both Sides; for I am almost weary of contending with a Champion, that will sing *Te Deum* when he has been routed: I am willing, likewise, to leave him

him in Possession of the Apocalypse, since a very learned Brother of his has so clearly explained it; and since the Book too is so very plain and exprefs for a fifth Monarchy, or temporal Kingdom of Christ at *Jerusalem*, which, as this Writer has assured us, did not enter into the Character of the prophetic Messiah. And thus he may see, that I do not desire more Words than ordinary with him about Things of little Consequence, and which do not affect the main Points in Debate.

I had often called upon him to give an Instance of any Act of legal Obedience, or any Fine, Mulct, or Penalty, which the Law required, and from which a Man might be exempted by Sacrifice. And yet he says, *p. 348.* *He had shewed, that in Cases where Sacrifices were appointed to be offered, a Man was always exempted from any Fine, Mulct, or Penalty; that the Sacrifice under that Constitution was always supposed to avert the Penalty, which would otherwise have been due.* But I had as often proved, that in such Cases the Sacrifice itself was the only Fine, Mulct, or Penalty, which the Law required; and, therefore, this being paid, and the Law satisfied by Obedience, nothing could be pardoned. One would think this should be visible enough, that Offering or Paying in a Sacrifice, which was the only legal Fine, could be no more Atonement or Remission, than any other Act of Obedience

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dience to the Law. But our Author is in great Distress for some Instance or other of real Propitiation and Remission under the Law, which yet, if he would rack himself to Death, he cannot find. He wanted here some Pretence or other of Justification, Atonement, and Remission by Sacrifice under the Law, which he might have applied to Christ, and the Imputation of his Righteousness. But if we should hear from him no more, till he can produce and clear up such a Case in the Law, I presume we can have little Hope of ever hearing from him again.

What the Author has offered in this, and his other Book, in Defence of his Doctrine of Satisfaction, redundant Merit, or imputed Righteousness, appears to me so exceedingly weak and jejune, that I shall not trouble the Reader any farther about it. He thinks he has fully and clearly answered all my Arguments and Objections on this Head, and I am willing to give him, and others who can take it, that Pleasure still. I know of no one learned Man within my Acquaintance, who has not thrown off this Doctrine, or who would now undertake the Defence of it. And I believe our Author would find but very few such learned Advocates, who would second him, among his own Acquaintance. But, however that be, I am content to rest this Part of the Argument intirely upon what has been already said on both Sides.

I had given, as I thought, some very plain Marks and Characteristicks of Imposture in the *Mosaic* Constitution; and the Author concludes his present Work with a pretended Answer to those fair Characters. He tell us, p. 352, "As to *Moses's* own Family, I think, "he gave the greatest Proof of his *Disinterestedness*, and how far he was from any "worldly, ambitious Views; since notwithstanding his vast Authority and Interest "with the People, though he left two Sons, "he did not raise either of them, or their "Children, to any Dignity at all, but left "them to continue undistinguished among "the common *Levites*, whose Business was "only to minister about the Sanctuary, in "inferior Offices under the Priests." But I doubt our Author, as a Piece of *true History*, has here given us a *mere Fiction of his own*. That *Moses* had two Sons living, or any Issue or Descendent from them, when he died, is not said; and the contrary is exceeding probable, and almost certain, from the Story itself. When *Moses* first came into *Egypt*, he had a sharp Controversy and Quarrel with his Wife about the Circumcision; and the Woman being forced to circumcise the Son she then had with her, was in a great Rage; she cast the Foreskin at *Moses's* Feet, and said, *Surely a very bloody Husband hast thou been to me*; and this she doubled and repeated, to shew her deep Resentment: Upon this *Moses* parted

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parted with her, and sent her away with her Son into *Midian* again. See *Exod.* iv. 24, 25. compared with *Chap.* xviii. 1, 2, 3, 4. As soon as *Moses* came into the Wilderness, or at the Beginning of their Marches and Decampments, *Moses* having parted with his first Wife, and sent her away to her Father, took to an *Ethiopian* Woman for his Wife, which highly provoked *Aaron*, and *Miriam* his Sister, as it well might; for this was certainly contrary to the Practice of all the *Hebrew* Patriarchs from the Beginning, and to *Moses's* own Law afterward. What became of this *Ethiopian* Woman afterwards, or whether *Moses* had any Children by her, is not said; but 'tis most probable, that he now parted with her too. For this whole Story, and how sure God was to be always on *Moses's* Side, though in ever so scandalous a Matter, the Reader may turn to *Numb.* xii. That *Moses's* parting with his first Wife, while in *Egypt*, and sending her Home to her Father, was a Divorce, and that he hereby disclaimed the Woman, and her Children, is plain enough from all the Circumstances of the Story. For though *Jethro*, with his Daughter, and her two Sons, came to pay *Moses* a Visit soon after his Arrival in the Wilderness, yet after a short Stay they went back again, and we never hear of them more.

But *Moses*, before he died, took Occasion to quarrel with the *Midianites*, and to destroy

stroy and plunder the whole Nation, saving none, great or small, but such of the Women who had not known Man. The Booty from this general Slaughter, which came to the Camp, besides what the Lord had reserved to himself, amounted to six hundred seventy five thousand Sheep, seventy two thousand Beeves, sixty one thousand Asses, and thirty two thousand Women that had not known Man, besides a vast Booty in Gold, Jewels, Ear-Rings, and other very rich and costly Ornaments. The Reader will find this Story at large, with the vile Pretence for such a bloody and most inhuman Slaughter, in *Numb. xxxi.* This was the Country in which *Moses* had been succoured, nourished, and generously treated forty Years; from which he had taken his Wife, and who must now have perished with her Children, and the whole Family, as many of them as were now remaining. And now I hope I have furnished our Author with a very clear Instance of the perfect *Disinterestedness, Gratitude, human Compassion, and natural Affection* of his divine Conqueror. And this, perhaps, may be a better Reason than the Author had given, why so cruel and blood-thirsty a Man was not suffered to live in his Posterity, or survive himself in his Issue.

He pretends, *p. 154,* That the *Levites* were dispersed thus up and down, to teach and instruct the People in the moral Law, and
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to keep them to their Duty to God and their Neighbour; and he talks of them, as if *Moses* had appointed Synagogues and Places of Worship up and down, where the People might resort to them as Preachers and Teachers of the Law; but this is all mere Fiction. They were intended, undoubtedly, to keep the People strict and steady to the Law of Tithes, Dues, and Offerings; and this they were well fitted for, and enabled to do, not only by Interest, but by their Situation. However the People might obey the moral Law, of which the Civil Magistrates and Judges were to take Cognizance, the *Levites* would certainly take Care, that nothing slipped their own Hands, and that the Priesthood was not cheated; and 'tis very evident, that they were set as Watchmen and Guardians, not for the People, but for the *spiritual Lords*.

I had urged, that *Moses* had no Law providing any Penalty for Drunkenness. He might declaim against this, or any other Vice, as a Prophet or Preacher of Righteousness, but he enacted no Law against it as a Lawgiver; and this Writer has not been able to instance it in any such penal, political Law of *Moses*. The Text he refers to, *Deut. xxi. 20, 21.* relates to the Law of Disobedience to Parents, and the Parents here were to be the Prosecutors of their own Child. And in this Case, an Act of Contempt, and Disobedience to Parents, was capital, and to be punished with Death,

Death, whether it was for Drunkenness, Cards, Dice, Dancing, or any Thing else; but if the Parents had been the Drunkards, neither the Son, nor any one else, could have brought them before the Magistrate, or punished them for it in Law. But the Author, to have made this Case to his Purpose, should have proved, that Drunkenness, by the Law of *Moses*, was to be punished with Death; or that the Law had provided any other Punishment for this Vice; but this he could not do.

In the next Place, he endeavours to vindicate *Moses* from allowing, or indulging by his Law, Polygamy, Concubinages, and arbitrary Divorces. I had argued, that there was no Restriction or Limitation by this Law against any Man's keeping as many Wives and Concubines as he pleased, and then turning them away, and taking new ones, as he thought fit; and this must stand good again, since he has produced nothing to the contrary. He observes, *p.* 356, That *Mahomet* limited the Number of Wives to four, beyond which a Man could not be indulged. But *Moses* had no such Restriction or Limitation; and, therefore, by his own Account, *Moses* must have left a greater Liberty or Indulgence to carnal Concupiscence, than *Mahomet*. He saith, *Moses* strictly prohibited all Whoredoms, Rapes, and Mens inticing and debauching Maids, and then deserting them. But what then? *Moses* might forbid
. 7.
such

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such Things as Acts of natural Injustice and Violence, and yet allow Men to keep as many Wives and Concubines as they pleased. But when this Writer can say nothing to the Purpose, he cannot help exposing himself by Impertinence. Instead of clearing *Moses* from what I had charged upon him, he gives several Instances, in which he thinks *Mahomet* gave greater carnal Indulgences than *Moses*. I must own, that I am not of his Opinion in this Case; but that is not the present Question.

With Regard to Divorcement, it is evident from the Law which he quotes, *Deut. xxiv. 1—4*. That this was a Man's own arbitrary Act; if he did not like, or could not love his Wife, he might write her a Bill of Divorce, and turn her away; and the Woman, in this Case, could have no Hearing, or Remedy by Law, how much soever she might have been abused. As to the Word *Unclean-ness*, or Filthiness, which is here used, it must signify any Thing which the Husband did not like, and of which he alone was to judge; for had she been guilty of *carnal Unclean-ness*, or defiling his Bed, he could not have divorced her, and set her at Liberty, but she must have been put to Death. Thus is this poor Gentleman driven to the hardest Shifts, and almost pressed to Death with the Weight of his *divine Authority*.

But with Regard to the *Trial of Jealousy*, he makes worse of it, if possible, than of all

all the rest. He saith, p. 364, That *by the unanimous Consent of all the Jewish Writers*, before a Man could put his Wife upon this Trial, he was obliged to produce Witnesses, that he had given her Warning before, and often declared the Cause or Reason of his Jealousy. But, by the *unanimous Consent of all the Jewish Writers*, this Author understands nothing of *Moses*, or the Prophets; which I could prove against him, were it necessary, from their Authority. I was arguing from the Law as it stands, and what the natural Consequences of it might be, with Respect to the Power of the Priest; and he has not been able to refute, or set aside one Word of it. I had shewn the plainest Marks of Imposture, and a Cheat in the Case; and he cannot prove the contrary. And if our good Christian Women had not a great deal of Patience, they would tear a Man to Pieces, who should maintain such a Law as of *divine Authority*. But I have now done with this Writer for the present, and till I receive his farther Commands.

CONCLUSION.

THE Reverend Mr. Lowman, in his Book, intitled, *A Dissertation on the Civil Government of the Hebrews*, goes all along

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along upon the common Supposition, that this Government was a Theocracy, and of immediate, divine Institution, in which God himself condescended to be their King, or civil Sovereign. This, with many others who had gone before him, he has taken up as granted, and argued from it without Proof, or so much as attempting to prove it against those who deny it. He has endeavoured, indeed, by the Bye, to answer some Objections which had been brought against it on the other Side. And here it is, that he has done me the Honour to take a particular Notice of me, as the Author of the *Moral Philosopher*. As to what he has offered concerning the Division of the Tribes, and their Government, under their civil and military Courts, I have nothing to do with it. He has given us many Things out of Dr. *Spencer*, and other Authors, which, for ought I know, might be worth collecting and putting together in a small Compass. But he has attack'd me very warmly, and with great Assurance of Success, in relation to the Computations which I had made of their spiritual Revenues, or the several Tithes, Dues, and Offerings paid in to the *Lord*, who, it seems, was the King of that Country, and kept his Court up and down in the Tabernacle. But as I have sufficiently considered this already, I need say no more of it here.

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The Author, in computing the proportional Share of the Spirituality in Land, measures only the open Fields, without the Walls, which was 2000 Cubits every Way from the Walls without. But he takes no Notice of the Ground, the Towns and Cities stood upon within the Walls, as if this made no Part of the Dimensions of the Country; but as their Towns and Cities were some of the best and largest in the Land, less than 1000 Cubits square cannot be allowed within the Walls; and some of their very large Cities, such as *Hebron*, must have been much more. The Author's Number, therefore, 52840 Acres, being increased, as the Square of 5 to 4, or as 25 to 16, his Area of 52840 Acres will be 82562 such Acres; and this is the thirty sixth Part of three Millions, their whole Quantity of Ground. And, therefore, this Tribe, who were not more than a fortieth Part of the People, must have been richer in Lands, than any other Tribe, in Proportion to their Number.

All these Measures have been taken by the common, antient Cubit of the *Egyptians*, *Greeks* and *Romans*, between which there was but very little Difference; and the *Israelites* had taken all their common Weights, Measures, and Computations of Time from *Egypt*. But if these *Hebrews* had their dou-

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ble Cubit too, when they measured any Thing for the *Lord*, as they had their double Shekel, and Talent, when they payed the *Lord* in Money, the *Levitical* Share of the Lands would be then double to what was before assigned. Besides, it must be considered, that these spiritual Lords had the largest, best, and richest of the Cities and Towns which had been then conquered, and in Possession, while the Community of the other Tribes lived as Villagers in the open Country. And as they were seldom out of War, their other Tribes must have lived a great Part of their Time in Tents and Camps in the open Fields, and have suffered all the Hardships and Fatigues of such a Life; while their spiritual Lords lived at Ease, pampering themselves with their Wives and Concubines in their rich Cities, and with all the delicate Provisions of the spiritual Court; and thus the poor, blinded, enslaved Laity must feed and fatten them with the Sweat of their Brows.

But the Author, *p.* 108. tells us, That “ in
 “ a foregoing Computation of the Contents
 “ of the promised Land, it appeared, that at
 “ a large Computation, it contained nineteen
 “ Millions two hundred thousand Acres; at
 “ a mean Computation, fourteen Millions
 “ nine hundred twenty six thousand; and
 “ at the lowest Computation, eleven Millions
 “ two hundred and sixty four thousand. This
 “ would

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“ would allow a large Remainder for publick
“ Uses, near twenty three Times as much as
“ all the *Levitical* Cities amounted to.” No
doubt but he might make Room enough for
the other Tribes too, some where or other in
Asia, so as that *Levi* might not have been
burdensome to them, if they had not en-
croached farther. He might have extended
the promised Land, from the *Mediterranean*
to the *Euphrates*, six hundred Miles in Length,
and from the Borders of the Wilderness thro’
all *Philistia*, and *Phœnicia* or *Zidonia*, to the
City *Sidon*, two hundred Miles in Breadth;
and then have concluded, that the other
Tribes had above fourteen thousand Times
more than the *Levites* had for their Share.
But the Mischief of it was, that the Spiritu-
ality had all their Share in present, actual Pos-
session; whereas the other Tribes had theirs
only in Hope, and in the mean while were
sent out a grazing, to encamp in the Fields
on all necessary Occasions, and to get their
Allotment afterward, as well as they could, by
the Sword.

Other learned Men, in computing the Set-
tlements of the *Israelites* in *Canaan*, have
only taken in that Part of the Country which
they actually conquered and possessed, with-
out including those other Parts, which were
three Times as much, which they only plead-
ed an imaginary Right to, but could never
inherit. And then, as to that Part of the

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inland, mountainous Country, which they broke in upon, 'tis plain, that they had never the Whole of it; for there were great Numbers of the several Tribes, or Nations of the antient *Canaanites*, who were still left among, and had Settlements with them, to *prove and to try them*, because they could not drive them out. If the learned Author will be so good as to make these necessary Allowances, he will find, that my Computation of the Landed Interest of *Levi*, or the *Hebrew* Spirituality, is not at all exorbitant in my own Favour. But if he will take the Liberty to enlarge their Borders at Pleasure, he may, with Dr. *Leland*, extend the promised Land to the *Euphrates*, and take in all *Arabia* and *Syria*; but had I an Estate to measure, I should willingly take this Gentleman as my Surveyor, if he could make five or six Times more of it than it really was.

But the Author having given, as he assures, a just and true Computation of the *Levitical* Share in the Lands, and declared, that this was not a hundredth Part of the Whole, presently comes to perplex himself, and the Reader, about those Dimensions which he had settled before. For in *Numb. xxxv.* it is said, in the fourth Verse, the Suburbs of the Cities, measuring from the Wall outward, should be 1000 Cubits *round about*, or on every Side. And yet in the next Verse, they are
ordered

ordered to measure from the *Wall outwards* 2000 Cubits, which is a manifest Contradiction, supposing the Measure to be taken both the same Way from the Wall outward. And, therefore, we must suppose, that the 2000 Cubits were from the Wall outward, to the Boundaries of the Suburbs; and the 1000 Cubits from the Wall inwards, to the Centre or Middle of the City. And thus the half Side of the whole Area, including City and Suburbs, would have been 3000 Cubits, and the Side of the Area 6000 Cubits square. But to make two Stations, one from the Wall, and the other from the Centre of the City, when both are ordered to be taken from the Wall, is very absurd. In this Case, it is but to mend the Text, by putting inward for outward from the Wall in the fourth Verse, and then the Whole will be very clear and intelligible. But the Author's Criticism does not only alter a Word, but the whole Sense, in making two different Stations, without giving the least Notice of it. Upon this Supposition, which, I think, is the fairest and most natural, the Sides will be increased as 3 to 2, and the Areas as the Squares of those Numbers, or as 9 to 4, which would bring the Author's 52840, to 118890 Acres.

I shall now compute, as exactly as I can, the whole Extent of this Country, according
to

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to the latest and most correct Account of it, and which I take to be that of Mr. *Whiston's*, corrected from *Josephus*; and this being done, I shall throw out all that belonged to the *Philistines*, *Zidonians*, and *Canaanites* of the southern Plains, who kept their Ground, and were never dispossest by the *Israelites*.

Sibor, or the River of *Egypt*, bounds *Canaan* to the South, in Latitude $31^{\circ} 10'$. *Zidon* bounds to the North, Latitude $33^{\circ} 50'$. The Difference of Latitude is $2^{\circ} 40'$. or 160 geographical Miles, which is very nearly 180 *English* statute Miles, the exact Proportion being as 22 to 25. The Breadth, taking in the whole Country, is not much different from one End to the other; tho' with Respect to that Part which the *Israelites* conquered, and possessed, the Breadth was vastly different. From *Old Tyre* to *Dan*, the longitudinal Line in the North is 64 Miles. The longitudinal Line, which passes through *Jerusalem*, in Latitude 32° . is the longest of all, and 84 Miles. At the River *Sibor*, in the South, from the *Mediterranean* to the Desert of *Kadishbarnea*, and the Confines of *Idumea*, is 60 Miles; and the same Distances hold in all the longitudinal Lines drawn from any Port of the *Mediterranean* to the Desert, on the West Side of the *Salt*, or *Dead Sea*. From these Mensurations, any one who will look on the Map may see, that

that this whole Country of *Canaan*, or *Palestine*, may be considered as 180 Miles in Length, and 70 in Breadth, between the *Mediterranean* on the West, and the River *Jordan* and the *Dead Sea* on the East; and then 180 into 70, gives 12600 square Miles for the Area, or Content of the whole Country.

Philistia and *Zidonia* contained all the Sea-Coasts of the *Mediterranean*, from *Zidon* to the River *Zidon*, or 180 Miles, the whole Length of *Canaan*. *Zidonia*, from the *Mediterranean* to the Extremity of the *Anti-Lebanon* Mountains, was 40 Miles. In the Latitude of *Jerusalem*, the Breadth of *Philistia*, from *Askalon* on the *Mediterranean*, to *Gorth*, a noted frontier Town of the *Philistines*, just on the Edge of the *Amorite* Mountains, was 30 Miles; and this is the Breadth of *Philistia* and *Zidonia*, in the most southerly Parts of *Beersheba*, to the *Philistine* Sea. *Philistia*, therefore, and *Zidonia*, or all the Sea-Coasts, for 180 Miles in Length, and 30 in Breadth, contained 5400 square Miles. Then from *Beersheba* in Latitude $31^{\circ} 27'$, to the Edge of the Wilderness southwards, in Latitude 31° , was 27 geographical Miles, or 32 *English* nearly, which multiplied by 70, the common Breadth, give 2240 square Miles; and this was possessed by the *Canaanites* of the Southern Plains, which the
Israe-

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Israelites could never drive out. And this 2240 added to the 5400 before, as the Content of *Philistia* and *Zidonia*, make 7640 square Miles. This, which the *Israelites* never conquered, or had in Possession, is to be subtracted from the 12600 square Miles, the Content of the whole Land, and the Remainder 4960 will be that Part of *Canaan* which the *Israelites* possessed in *Canaan*, properly so called, or the West Side of *Jordan*, and, the *Dead Sea*, between that and the *Mediterranean*. But they had two Tribes and a half settled on the Mountains, on the Eastern or *Arabian* Side of *Jordan*, and who had gained Settlements there among the *Ammonites* and *Moabites*. I shall suppose their Extent of Lands here to be proportional to what it was in proper *Palestine*, or *Canaan*, as $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $9\frac{1}{2}$, or as 5 to 19: And then as 19 to 5, so is 4960 to 1305, or 1310, to give a little, and keep in round Numbers; which 1310 added to 4960, will give 6270, for the whole Area, or Quantity of Land inherited by the *Israelites* on both Sides *Jordan*. This 6270 square Miles, make 4012800 Acres; which divided by 118890, the Quantity of *Levitical* Lands, as before, will give a 33^d Part to the *Levites* on the general Landed Interest, when they were but a 40th Part, at most, of the People; and, therefore, surely, they had not only equal Landed Interest on this

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this Computation, but the Balance was very much in their Favour.

No Map of *Canaan*, or the *Israelites* Settlements on both Sides of *Jordan*, has ever observed or inserted full 480 Cities, Towns, or Places in all, of one Sort or other, great or small, fenced or open; and of these, as the *Israelites* never had more than one Half of the Country, they could have but one Half of the Towns and Cities, which would not exceed 240, of which 48 is the fifth Part. And, therefore, supposing no Favour had been given to the Lord in this Division, and that the *Levites* Cities and Towns had been no better than the rest, a fifth Part of the Interest, to a fortieth Part of the People, would have given them a Landed Interest in Ground Rents, and Building, superior to the other Tribes, at the Rate of 8 to 1; and every one knows, how vastly the Profits upon such Rents exceed what can be made of the same Quantity of Land in common Pasture, or Tillage, which may be 100, or 1000, or even 10000 to one; and, therefore, 'tis plain, that whoever had the Lands in *Israel*, the Spirituality, Hierarchy, or Theocracy, were the Landlords. And this may serve to settle the Account between the Clergy and Laity of *Israel*, with Regard to the Profits arising from Ground-Rents and Buildings.

I shall now consider how the Case stood with *Levi*, in Respect to the whole national Property,

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Property, or Produce, upon all the Labour. And here I shall cut the Argument as short as possible with this Author; because he seems to understand Matters of this Nature better than some others of his Character, and has been so kind as to dip into Calculations.

That the Tribe of *Levi*, or Spirituality of *Israel*, had the Tenths of every Thing in Kind, as of Grass, Corn, Wine, Oil, Sheep, Cattle, &c. is well known. They had likewise the first-born Males of Man and Beast, which were either to be paid in Kind, or to be redeemed with Money, or some Equivalent, when they were not to be offered in Sacrifice. I had supposed, that taking it at an Average, either in the human or brutal Kind, one in five would be a first-born Female, and one in ten a first-born Male, especially of the brutal Kind, where double or triple Births are so common. I always understood the first that opened the Womb to be the first Impregnation and Production, whether one or more; for otherwise it would be next to impossible in Beasts, that bring forth a Plurality, to know which came out first, as in the Case of *Jaakob* and *Esau*. Now this First-born of all the Males, of Man and Beast, with the Redemption Money, or Equivalent payable for Things not taken, or accepted in Sacrifice, could not be less than a Tenth of all the Labour and Produce on all
the

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the Pasture-Lands, which I have supposed to be one Half.

Besides these constant, stated, and general Dues and Offerings, there were a great Number of occasional ones, of which the Cases were very numerous, and often unavoidable. I shall take all these at half a Tenth, or a Tenth on the Arable and Tillage Lands only, which were the poorest, and at the lowest Rents. Now this half Tenth, with the other of the First-born on the Pasture, will be a Tenth on all the Lands, which with the first general Tenth on Corn, Wine, Oil, Sheep, Cattle, &c. will be two Tenths, or a Fifth. This Tribe then had not less than a Fifth of the whole national Property, or Whole of all the Lands and Labour of the Country; and this neat and free. Now I would leave it to any Farmer, or Occupier and Manurer of Lands to determine it for our Author, whether a Fifth of the neat Produce or Value of all the Lands, as annually arising from the Labour, must not, at the very lowest, be more than an annual Rent, as it might be five, ten, or even twenty such Rents, where the Produce is very rich, and the Labour of Raising and Manuring proportionally great. But the Tither, or spiritual Lord, pays nothing for Labour; and if the Land with great Labour, Expence, and Hazard, produces twenty annual Rents, he has four of them, or a fifth Part free and

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neat, whatever it be. Now a fifth Part of the whole Property, or Produce on all the Lands and Labour given to a fortieth Part of the People, must have made this spiritual Body proportionally richer than any of the rest, at the Rate of 8 to 1; and this I had before proved to have been the Case, with Respect to their Property in Ground-Rents, and Buildings, even supposing the *Levitical* Towns and Cities to have been no larger, or better in Proportion, than the rest; which yet was not the Case.

All over the East, their Cities and Towns of Strength and Defence, had always Lands enough, within the Walls, to supply the Inhabitants with all Necessaries of Life, without any Communication with the open Country, so as to enable them to hold out a Siege for many Years; and if they were not scaled, or stormed, they could never be starved to a Surrender. And, therefore, the Produce of their own Lands upon the original Grant, both within the Walls, and without, must have been sufficient to have abundantly supplied this whole Tribe, for their own Consumption; and, therefore, the Fifth of the whole Produce of all the rest of the Country, which these spiritual Lords receiv'd free, they must sell again for Money, either to their own Subjects, or Foreigners. And this must have given them an Opportunity to drain all
the

the Money of the Nation into their own Coffers, which could then never issue, or circulate back again. And the Lay-Tribes being thus kept down, and drained of their Money, could only deal with one another by Way of Barter, or exchanging one Commodity for another, and paying for all Labour with Goods in the Necessaries of Life.

Under such a Constitution, the *Levitical* Cities must have been publick Fairs and Markets, where their own People, or Foreigners in a Time of Scarcity, or on any common, regular Demand, might be supply'd with all marketable Goods and Commodities. And what a Fund of Wealth and Power this must have been, I may leave any one to judge.

It must be farther considered, that this spiritual Tribe, or Hierarchy, were not limited by the original Grant, so as never to increase their Inheritance or Quantity of Lands. For though no Lay-man could sell or alienate his Inheritance to another, yet he might give as much as he pleased of it to the *Lord*, and make it irredeemable for ever. And as these Gifts, or perpetual Grants to the Spirituality, were look'd upon as highly meritorious and acceptable to the *Lord*, what Effects might it not have produced, supposing the Tribes could have made farther Conquests, and the Project

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of universal Theocracy had taken Effect? What Use has been made of such a Dominion over Conscience, and blind Obedience of the People, in Popish Countries, is very well known; and, I believe, the *Levitical Hierarchy* were not, and would not have been less attentive to their own Interest than the Papal *spiritual Power*. And 'tis somewhat wonderful, what should make some spiritual Men now so fond of such a State and Constitution of Things, and so very much concerned to defend it as divine, unless it is to shew what Wealth and Power they should think fit, reasonable, and worthy of God, if they could but get it; or else, perhaps, it may be to make us the more thankful for our Happiness, by letting us see how much better a *Hierarchy* of human Establishment is, than a divine one.

I think it is evident, from all the Books of *Moses*, that the *Hebrews* had a Duality of divine Persons, Beings, or Objects of Adoration and Worship, the one inferior and subordinate to the other. Besides *Jehovah Elohim*, *Jehovah El Shaddai*, the Lord God, the Lord God Almighty, or the *supream God*, they had the Angel *Jehovah*, or *Jehovah the Angel*, who, tho' not the same Being, assumed the same Name of *Jehovah*, as the prime Minister, and immediate Representative of
Jeho-

Jehovah El Shaddai, or the supream, independent Being. *Jehovah* had been always the *Hebrew* Name of the supream, independent Being, from the first Creation; but the prime, ministerial Angel, or the Angel of God's Presence, had never assumed the Name of *Jehovah*, or been known under this divine Character, till he appeared and spake to *Moses*, gave him a special Commission as a Lawgiver, and entered into a peculiar Covenant and Relation as the God of that Nation, and the Guardian Protector of that Polity only, and of no other Law, or civil Constitution upon Earth, then in being, or that ever was to be instituted, or owned by him, in any Time to come. That this Angel of *Jehovah*, or Angel *Jehovah*, as it ought to be rendered, was not *Jehovah El Shaddai*, or the supream God, is too plain to be disputed with any the least Appearance of Reason. *Jehovah*, the God of *Israel*, was a local, circumscriptive, visible, and oracular God, who gave the Law by *Moses*, and who was ever to reside in that Nation, and to support that civil Polity, and no other. No other Nation, therefore, could be ever intitled to the Favour and Protection of the God of *Israel*, without submitting to, and obeying the Law which he had given by *Moses*. All Nations who would not subject themselves to this political Law

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and Constitution, were to be for ever rejected and forsaken by the God of *Israel*, or the Angel *Jehovah*, who being the prime Minister, Agent, and immediate Representative of *Jehovah Elobim*, or *El Shaddai*, had delivered and confirmed the only Law, Priesthood, and Sacrifices that could ever be accepted, or owned, by the supream Being. This is what the whole *Hebrew* Nation ever understood, from first to last; nor is there any *Jew* now in the World, but still understands it so; and to do them Justice, I think it is impossible, in any fair Sense or Construction, to understand it otherwise.

I must therefore leave our learned Author to consider farther, whether this was not a national, tutelar, residential God, and whether such a Scheme of Government must not have been designed and calculated for universal Empire and Dominion, or to enslave all Mankind to this Nation? This is certainly a Matter of very great Importance, and if the Author has a Mind to enter deeper into it, and to have it fairly and farther canvassed and enquired into, I should be very glad and ready to join Issue with him. But if he should think fit to do this, I hope he will keep strictly to the Nature and original Constitution of the Law itself, and not barely shew his Reading, by amusing us
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with the different Opinions and Constructions of modern Writers ; which would signify no more with me, than if without any farther Authority or Reason he was to give us his own Opinion.

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